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ABSTRACT

Designed to provide teachers and administrators with suggestions for innovative approaches to providing vocational education to handicapped high school students, this report contains first person descriptions of six model programs in vocational education. In chapter 1 four administrators and instructors comment on their Related Vocational Instruction Program, operating in Georgia. The Special Education/Rehabilitation/Vocational Education (SERVE) Program in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, is similarly described in chapter 2. Chapter 3 contains feedback by administrators and teaching staff connected with the Support Services Program at the Career Education Center in Denver, Colorado. The Palm Beach County Schools, Florida, vocational programs for students with special needs are described in chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains administrator and instructor comments on the Career Training Center in the Keen High School District in Bakersfield, California, and Chapter 6 concerns the Equal Opportunity Program of NASA at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. Topics covered in individual commentaries include program goals, program design, suggestions for program implementation, the differences and similarities between handicapped and nonhandicapped students, teacher attitudes toward the students and programs, the role of special education, and suggestions for staff development. (MN)

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vocational
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students



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This is a report on exemplary practices in vocational education for handicapped students in secondary schools. Commissioned by the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the report's general title is "Media Presentations on Mainstreaming the Handicapped." Not a "report" in the usual sense, it is instead a number of first person descriptions of innovative practices told by the innovators themselves. This form is a natural outgrowth of the diversity of our schools, the ubiquitousness of change, and the relatively recent date of introduction of mainstreaming into the vocational education setting. It recognizes that instead of "recipes" for solving problems, teachers and administrators may prefer some clues toward approach and attitude. Here, innovators themselves speak to us in their own language. Here you will see the importance of individualized needs assessment and the development of imaginative approaches to the solution of problems. You will see the importance of commitment and flexibility. Most of all, you will see here that in the development of programs to serve handicapped students in vocational education in secondary schools, people still matter.

Roger Smith
Project Director
Radio and Television for Learning
WGBH Educational Foundation

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Foreword

You have picked up this book because you have some interest in the career development of young people with handicaps. You may be a teacher charged with integrating handicapped students in your classroom, an administrator faced with new responsibilities in educating handicapped youngsters, a parent seeking opportunities for your child, a young person struggling to grow up successfully with your handicap. Whether you are one of these or yet another, I am eager to introduce you to the people in this book.

This book was meant to be a volume of information on model programs in vocational education for high school students with handicaps. But in the writing it took on its own direction and momentum; in the end, I didn't really write it at all. Others wrote it. It happened this way: As our researcher Bunny Chesler began making contacts with programs for the handicapped across the United States, and as our expert advisors gave their opinions about this one or that one, it became apparent that there are certain very special people scattered across the land making these programs happen. They are people who dreamed and worked to bring programs into existence, people who live and breathe them daily. They can reveal their essence--their lifeblood--and their vagaries far better in their own words than I could. So I decided to let them speak for themselves and directly to you, as they were more than willing to do, under their real names.

The short first and last chapters I could not resist writing myself, in order to tell you some of the things that moved me, taught me, and otherwise enriched me in the course of meeting these people, to whom I remain profoundly grateful.

Geri Elisabeth Wieler
Boston, March 1979

Introduction

“A person is not handicapped because he has a ‘handicap,’ but because the environment around him treats him like he’s handicapped.”

Robert Webb
Bakersfield, California

“Our training program here has been just beautiful because these handicapped students get so wrapped up in the whole idea—in the chance to try being trained at something they know nothing about and possibly getting hired permanently.”

Shirley Price
NASA, Houston

Shirley Price was born black, female, a dwarf without arms—ponder for a moment such odds against becoming independent and successful. I met Shirley in Houston where she introduced me to NASA's on-site training for the handicapped at the Johnson Space Center, a program for which she is largely responsible and which she and others describe in Chapter 7.

For the moment however, I will speak not of the career opportunities she opens to young people with handicaps, but of the opportunity she gave me to understand what this book is really all about: the choice in our attitudes, expectations, acceptance of handicapped people and the dependence or independence we nurture in them through that choice.

Like most people who have not had much experience with those who have severe handicaps, I spent a good deal of my time with Shirley Price in awe, marveling at all the things she could do with her wonderfully flexible body and her dexterous feet. I sat on my own hands as she assembled parts of a slide projector with her feet, made phone calls, riffled through photographs, and told funny stories to put me at ease. Shirley's description of her work and outlook are an important contribution to this book, but what she really gave to me was the opportunity to get beyond discomfort, sympathy, and incredulity to Shirley the person, to whom a lack of height and arms seems little more inconvenience than lack of wings is to me.

When my repeated attempts to get a cab from NASA's Space Center to Houston failed, at the end of our interview, Shirley came to the rescue. She herself provided me with the transportation that hub of technology couldn't turn up. After driving me to a second appointment, she took me to the airport, where we spent our last hour together. After our parting, my mind was on her humor, our woman-to-woman talk, her goal of becoming a psychiatrist.

Only later did I put my whole experience of Shirley Price into perspective. People with easily identified handicaps tend to remind us of human vulnerability; I found myself with the uneasy feeling of "There, but for the grace of God, go I." Somewhere, deep inside,

don't we all--all of us without obvious handicaps--wonder if we could bear such a cross? Don't we feel anxiety, sympathy, or perhaps protectiveness? Certainly I did, but Shirley brought me beyond this. She gave me no time for dwelling on vulnerability, for she is, quite simply, a dynamo of strength and capability. She made me recall that only those things in life that call for problem-solving make any of us grow into competence and maturity. Without challenge, life is really very empty.

Shirley was not the only person I met who expanded my vision of what is possible for even severely handicapped people. Among quite a few others who stand out in reflections on my travels is Robert Webb, a high school student who speaks in Chapter 6. Besides being born with multiple physical anomalies, Robert suffered paralysis from the waist down at the age of seven. He is an outgoing optimist with wisdom rare in a person his age--or any age. Yet, by his own admission, he might not have found his own path to successful independent living without a school program that took his special needs into account and without mentors to encourage bold directions. Robert speaks to an important issue: That handicaps are located in the environment, too. No matter how much people with handicaps want to succeed, environments, including other people, often restrict them. It is my hope that every reader of this book will be motivated to find some way, large or small, to lessen those restrictions.

I was asked to write this book primarily for people facing new responsibilities in the vocational education of high school students with handicaps. While I have varied experience as an educator, I have no formal training in either vocational or special education. I am not in a position to improve on the experts who have written about good programs and practices. What I have tried to do is identify with readers--to ask myself, how would I, were I a classroom teacher or administrator, meet the task of educating identifiably handicapped youngsters together with those unlabeled youngsters already within my responsibility? Putting the problem to myself thus, I began to understand the concerns others have expressed: How will these kids fit into established routines and curricula? How much disruption will there be? Where will time to understand them come from? Who will train our teachers? Where are the extra funds and support services? How can we ensure safety? Who will hire them when we graduate them? Won't the other students be cheated of attention and progress?

The only way to cope with such questions seemed to be to ask some people who had already come to grips with them. An advisory board of experts and a very competent researcher helped me locate more than enough people of this ilk. So I set out to meet them, to talk with them at length, and to help them share their attitudes, insights, and practical solutions with everyone this book

reaches--and, as I said in the Foreword, this book is not so much about them as *by* them, my only role being to elicit their flow of words and to do some rearranging and organizing and otherwise avail myself of writers' prerogatives.

Their personalities, roles, and backgrounds vary widely, but they share a fundamental commitment to education for all young people--a commitment to provide maximum opportunity for choice and development. They share the confidence that every child will thrive in his or her own way given a chance and encouragement. They do not see handicapped youngsters as "those kids," nor do they dwell on limitations in people, settings, or funds. Their focus is on abilities, not disabilities, and they tend to find resources as needed to get their job done.

Along with these role model teachers, administrators, counselors, and support people, I interviewed others within their sphere of influence: community employers, students, teachers still reluctant but learning. I was also often aware of the vital roles supportive parents play in guiding students toward independent living and work, as members of individual education plan (IEP) committees and in countless other capacities, although I did not encounter parents directly in my visits to schools and workplaces.

This book is not concerned with facts about legislative mandates, resources, program structures, or curricula except as these arise naturally during discussions that focus on people-to-people issues. So much literature is available on these subjects (see Bibliography for suggestions) it seemed unnecessary to include them formally. What I got from the role models, and what I pass on, is the energy of their enthusiastic commitment to continual change: change toward a society in which labels do not come before people, in which schools provide opportunity and supportive services to all students with the goal of mainstreaming everyone into a rich, diverse, productive array of adult citizens.

My interviewees spoke as freely of problems as of successes, but, on the whole, they were the kind of people who do not create problems unnecessarily. They were too busy working on positive solutions--helping students grow toward satisfying careers despite their handicaps, helping those who teach them to overcome their own handicaps of prejudice about what is or is not possible. And the progress they make occasionally seems to border on the miraculous.

Across the land I found examples of high school students who were labeled "trainable mentally retarded," or were so physically handicapped they were expected to be totally dependent all their lives, but who were functioning normally and better. This is not to say that all handicaps disappear or are overcome under optimal circumstances (though I met a few experienced persons who would

go that far. I have come to share the view that handicaps are created as much by society as by nature and am convinced that our biggest job is to discard our definitions of limitation so that the handicapped are free to show us how far they can go and wish to go.

A few educators felt that handicapped students needed separate attention, part-time settings of their own in which to grow. Most felt that special support services permitted full integration of handicapped students into vocational education curricula. Some felt there was virtually no need to differentiate handicapped and nonhandicapped students, believing that "labels are for cans, not people." In many classrooms, official distinctions have blurred as the "known handicapped" become more competent and special resource people become available to those without labels. All in all, particular program structures and tactics can take any forms with equally good results as long as there is a strong feeling of caring and commitment in the air, together with confidence in abilities and appropriate supportive measures. *The greater the faith in handicapped students' capabilities, the more capable they become. The fewer their perceived limitations, the fewer their real ones seem to be. The more achievement is expected of them, the more it is realized.* The overriding impression I received from all the role models I interviewed is that handicapped youth will go just as far as those who educate them believe they will go.

Related Vocational Instruction (RVI) Program, State of Georgia

“Every kid can learn something, and if he/she doesn't learn, it's not his fault, it's not her fault—it's our fault. We're supposed to be the teachers. Don't speak to me of limitations, I want to shoot for the moon.”
Douglas Gill

The secondary schools of Georgia, ranging from urban high schools to comprehensive rural high schools and area vocational schools, have achieved widespread interdisciplinary cooperation between vocational education and special education through the Related Vocational Instruction (RVI) program designed and implemented by Douglas H. Gill, state project coordinator of vocational programs for the handicapped.

The RVI program's goal is to provide handicapped learners with the same job skills that nonhandicapped learners acquire in vocational programs. The means to achieve that goal is through individualized educational plans (IEPs) and supplemental instruction and support given by specially trained Related Vocational Instruction teachers, called RVIs, while students are mainstreamed into regular vocational programs. RVIs are teachers certified in special education who have received in-service training (for which they receive graduate credits) that enables them to work very directly with vocational teachers. The core of this training is a six-week full-time workshop in which special education teachers learn to teach practical tasks relevant to vocational education courses, tasks that will replace the dull drills of traditional special education courses. Their students move back and forth between vocational education classrooms and the special education room, called the resource room, where they receive whatever supplemental instruction they need. The RVI provides academic instruction relevant to vocational courses, tutors students in vocational areas, performs assessments, play counseling and advocacy roles, assists with job placement (in cooperation with state vocational rehabilitation services), serves on IEP committees, and generally facilitates communication among all those working with each student. Ideally, 50 percent of RVIs' time is spent in their own resource rooms and in liaison activities.

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In less than two years since the first RVI demonstration, 110 RVI programs have been developed within the state of Georgia's 150 vocational education programs. In his unassuming office at Georgia Southern College, Douglas Gill, who continues to train RVIs and to oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the statewide network, described the program to me. We were joined by Earl Andrews, the RVI program monitor. Then we were off to visit a centralized rural high school in Vidalia, some fifty miles away, where the program we had discussed all morning would be demonstrated by Steve Weeks, who directs the vocational program, and Myra Thompson, the RVI.

After hearing about and seeing the RVI program, it seemed a compelling and obvious solution to the problems of vocational education for students with handicaps. Why did I not encounter programs like this everywhere I went? Why did they not exist in every state? The answer, I believe, is that Doug Gill has supplied Georgia with two uniquely powerful resources: the belief that every youngster can go as far as he or she wants to go and the ability to make and carry out a very practical step-by-step "game plan" for helping them do so. When Doug's father was suddenly disabled at the age of thirty-seven, there was no program or effort to help him regain lost abilities. He now lives out his life dependent on others. Something told Doug it could have been different, and he has tried to prevent that kind of frustration for as many others as possible. The more people I met in my travels, the more I came to realize that this is a central challenge: to shift assumptions about the incapacity of people with handicaps to a positive focus on capability, then to rearrange the environment until it becomes unrestrictive.

Doug Gill, Project Coordinator for Vocational Projects for the Handicapped, Georgia

Every kid can learn something. If he or she doesn't learn it's not his fault, it's not her fault--it's our fault. We're supposed to be the teachers: how come we aren't teaching? Every kid can learn. You just have to find the right key, you have to try the right instructional methods and procedures. That's our job!

I have a vested interest in making it work come hell or high water! If we can't help these kids achieve competence, then we have missed the boat completely, we have not done our job. Are we going to educate some kids and not others? Are we going to settle for that? I personally am not. Handicapped people and their parents pay taxes like the rest of us.

In 1975, this country spent \$114 billion on dependent living programs. If the trend continues, it'll be over \$200 billion by 1980. That really hits me in the face; it doesn't make sense. There just isn't any question that it makes economic sense to educate handicapped people. But it's more than that; it's a question of everyone having the right and the access to opportunity.

It's been our experience that kids--handicapped kids--given access and opportunity with proper support can function as well as nonhandicapped kids. It may take time to find the key that will unlock a kid, you may have to make more than one or two tries to find what interests him or her, but if you keep searching you'll find it. And I'm not talking about training them; I'm talking about education. Back when I was actually

in the classroom, in special ed, some of the kids thought I was too hard on them. They'd complain that I made them do things they couldn't do. But when it was all over, they were doing things they "couldn't do," and they'd begun to believe in themselves--believe that they *could*. That attitude has to prevail: not, "Well, I don't know if I can," but, "I can." You know, the handicapped aren't so different from the nonhandicapped. They may have disabilities, limitations, but in terms of what makes human beings tick, they aren't different. Even in severely retarded kids there are untapped resources we should be getting to. There are a lot of teachers in our program here in Georgia who thought at first that I was giving them a lot of bull about kids' abilities. Now the majority of them believe kids can do it; they're coming back to me and telling me their handicapped kids are performing better than the nonhandicapped. Maybe they don't learn the variety of skills or do everything the same way, but the progress is so obvious.

I have problems philosophically with a lot of what people are doing in vocational education for the handicapped. It isn't really education at all, in many cases, but training. *We're supposed to educate people, not train them. My dog comes when she's called, because I've trained her, but she isn't educated. Education allows people the freedom to make their own choices.* If we train kids for specific jobs, train the particular skills for one or a few jobs, we limit them. Fitting kids to specific jobs locks them into those jobs for the rest of their lives. I have problems with that. Handicapped people are normal people with certain limitations, and I'm not saying you don't have to tailor programs to meet their particular needs, but we shouldn't impose limitations on them that they don't have.

The way I see it, the responsibility of special education in vocational education of the handicapped is to provide those skills that apply to any vocation. Voc ed teaches specific occupational skills; our Related Vocational Instruction (RVI) program is really supplemental education. Ideally it should start well before high school, even in elementary school. If you wait until high school to begin a vocational education program, then you never have time for the specific skills and kids wind up on the short end of the stick because you've run out of time. They get far less than you're capable of giving them. In a lot of ways, our program is still in its early stages. We're at about step two, and we'll see a lot change by steps four and five up the line.

Back when I was a special ed teacher in high school and we didn't have access to any voc ed programs we had these work-study programs, placing kids in jobs out in the community. They were just placed without being prepared in any way. What really turned the whole thing

around for me was one day, when a kid came up to me and said, "I quit your job yesterday." I thought for a minute about that and realized it was a pretty profound statement. He was entirely right. I got the job for him, I took him to it every day, I picked him up again and brought him back to school. It wasn't his job; he had no commitment to it or to the employer--or to himself. He only went because he didn't want to go to school.

A lot of handicapped people get locked into jobs after high school because of this kind of thing. Employers don't have any commitment to the kids, or they just don't have time to teach them anything. And nobody learns on the job if it's low level and uninteresting. If I were a janitor, I'd probably be a real behavior problem. My attitude wouldn't be good because I wouldn't see any significance in what I was doing. A lot of times we assume kids can't do better because they lack skills and can't learn them when the problem really is one of relevance.

We limit career choices for handicapped people more ways than we can even catalog! We see them as some totality, some homogeneous group, when they're as individual as you and I are.

I began to address the relationship between voc ed and special ed in high schools from a state-level perspective in 1976, on an Education Profession Development Act fellowship. A nine-month internship with the state Department of Education quickly showed there was no relationship between these two areas; they were housed in separate buildings and the people didn't really know each other. A lot of special ed was still taught in isolated classrooms, though they'd been updated toward the resource room concept. I wrote the RVI program to try to establish a relationship between voc ed and special ed all the way up the line from both sides. Our first workshop was in August 1977. By now (January 1979) we have 110 programs throughout the state in 88 school systems, and we're serving over 2,000 handicapped students. We're mainstreaming handicapped kids in regular voc ed classes and supporting them in a resource-type environment with special ed people. It's clear that both disciplines have to work together to meet the employment needs of the handicapped. Each side brings a set of skills and expertise to the relationship. Voc ed knows the working world; special ed knows learning techniques that work with special kids. Pairing them up, we can capitalize on their expertise, rather than duplicating services by trying to teach them each other's skills. That's happening in a lot of places and it wastes resources.

Not that they don't learn from each other. Our voc ed people were basically skeptical, and rightly so. They'd ask what that special ed teacher knew about metal fabrication. And it wasn't till our RVI people *did* know the correct kind of bead on a metal joint that they were accepted. RVIs aren't traditional special ed teachers; their slot is used in a very different way. You see, it doesn't cost more to set up these support services, we're using money that's already there. We're just changing the delivery system. Sometimes school systems hire new people in the old slots; sometimes we retrain those already in them. The teacher no longer stays in one special ed classroom, but follows the kids around to their voc ed classes, works with the voc ed instructors to develop relevant learning materials that can be taken back to the resource room. It works much better for the kids and for the teachers. Both of them were bored with the old basic readers and seatwork they'd been doing since day one. At first the special ed teachers didn't want to let their kids go into voc ed classes; they were afraid the kids wouldn't be understood or taken care of properly. They were really creating dependency in the kids. Now they see the kids can do it and are enjoying it. They work at reading when it's about things they're learning in voc ed, or at math or whatever.

The voc ed teachers didn't want to have to fool with kids who couldn't learn. They were teaching kids to be auto mechanics or building trade craftsmen and didn't want to be bothered with kids who couldn't keep up. *The thing began working, not when we discussed helping relationships between the voc ed teachers and the special ed people at workshops, but when those relationships were demonstrated in practice. Their commitment--from both sides--had to be built on real experience over time.*

I'm a former college football player, and I insist on having a game plan. If we don't have any plays to run, we'll get blown out of the ballgame. It takes goals, strategies, an organized method. I established a logical plan and a logical sequence of steps that both voc ed and special ed could agree on. I worked with system-level people to hammer out a step-by-step program, set up chains of command and all that before we ever involved kids in the program. By the time we began with kids there was a logical sequence to follow and everyone was oriented to it, knew their responsibilities, their roles.

We have three or four area vocational high schools in the state, but basically we're working with the comprehensive high schools that have voc ed and regular programs side by side. So a lot of the special ed kids are already in the building. Not all the voc ed teachers were willing to go along with us, some of them we just had to work around because there was, at that time, no way to enforce participation. The voc ed concerns, on the surface were about safety and such

things. Actually, if you cut through the rhetoric, it boiled down to being a little bit afraid of handicapped kids. What they needed was help, resource people, someone to talk to and work with who understood the kids.

So we built our system around the demonstrated support of RVIs. We paralleled parts of what went on instructionally in voc ed classrooms back in the resource rooms so there would be relevancy for the kids and so they'd get the extra practice they needed. This way they could get some pre-training before they actually went into the voc ed classes and additional support afterwards.

To place the kids in classes, we first tried a lot of standard assessment models, but we found they weren't always good predictors. Motivation is more important--a kid's interest in an area. Also the way the instructor relates to kids is important. For actual skills assessment, we have used a series of work samples taken directly from the courses and got the instructors' commitment to taking kids who could do them. Once we got a kid into a program, we were still flexible, making changes if it didn't work out, helping them find a new area if necessary. You know, a kid might think he really wanted welding and then find out the arc welder scared him to death.

Our kids have a wide range of handicaps--they're orthopedically impaired, trainable mentally retarded, have sensory impairments, learning disabilities. We try to get vocational instructors who have hearing impaired kids at least to finger spell or to use interpreters. Most problems can be alleviated if people just go a little extra. *The main thing is to realize that education's got to be for all kids; we just can't go on being elitist about it. Part of the elitism in voc ed is in reaction to the old view that made it a dumping ground--the idea that kids who couldn't read could at least work with their hands. We have to get over all our selectivity and educate everyone equally.*

Naturally we've got our success stories. One kid that comes to mind who was very quiet, hardly ever said anything. He was probably classified as a disadvantaged EMR student. Last I heard he was living independently, married, and earning \$7.50 to \$8.00 an hour. But they're supposed to be successes; that kind of story simply means we're doing our job. *We need to make kids independent, to teach them functional earning skills. No more, no less. If we don't do that for all the kids, we're not doing our job. Don't speak to me of limitations; I want to shoot for the moon.*

My job is to go around visiting the different programs throughout the state, collecting data and making suggestions that will be useful in improving them. We use a very low-keyed approach and that's been successful. This being a cooperative program, there're a lot of people involved. It's very important to have everybody view the program with the right attitude, to encourage the development of it, and one of my main roles is to bring people together with a good positive approach to meeting the many problems a program of this kind has. There are student problems that are unique, and certainly administration problems that are special, and sometimes you have attitudes that are negative. A lot of my job is dealing with people who don't really know what the program is or what its potential is. I've had to arrange conferences to get just about everybody in the system together: counselors, superintendents or principals, and the special ed and vocational education supervisors and the RVI teachers-- just to get everybody to have a meeting of minds. I had an RVI teacher that nobody would listen to, for instance, and she was very frustrated. She knew the program, she knew what was needed, but nobody would listen to her. Then I came in and said it, with whatever credibility I have, and they began to listen to her. We are seeing some real growth and change now, and I, of course, enjoy personally being part of that.

I'm actually on special assignment from the academic department here. One of my objectives, as I look down the line, is to get some background experience to better prepare me for a more significant role in education for the handicapped. I'm an associate professor here at the college, in vocational education, and I've got about ten years' experience in industry, besides my academic background. I've taught electrical engineering and industrial engineering technology. All this is helpful in terms of talking to people, because I have some credibility in both the academic area and the vocational area.

Let me tell you about one program that I visited. There were twenty-two mentally retarded students and one with a learning disability. Of those twenty-three students in the program, twenty-one were performing at the B or better level in the vocational classes. I think that's fantastic. They were in regular classes, fully mainstreamed, and they were as turned-on, fired up a bunch of kids as you've ever seen. I wonder if we can really understand what this means!

Of course these kids are getting support. The vocational supervisor there last year was key. He was very capable, did a tremendous job supporting the program and the kids. He left this year to take another job and the new supervisor--the one that stepped into his place--is an RVI trained teacher. He was already sold on the concept, so

he just moved in and continued the program. The situation in that school is tremendously cooperative; all the vocational teachers, the RVI teacher, and the aide are really turned on, really fired up, and that, of course, all works to produce the end result.

I try to be objective; that's my scientific background. Maybe somebody is giving some students the benefit of the doubt when determining grades. But, regardless, these are kids with IQs of 50 to 70 and they are demonstrating the skills. And look what's happening to their self-concept. Imagine coming from being the dummy in the corner to this?! Not just average, but above average. The intellectual education is important, but the emotional development here, that's really more important.

The economic ramifications are going to be tremendous, especially if this spreads to other states. I believe the American public will respond well to it, that they really want to see this happen. The need to be worthwhile is as strong as the need to eat. Everyone needs to feel they're doing something that counts and that others recognize it as important.

Let me say something else. Philosophically, I think special education teachers and vocational teachers are really very close. As this program has brought them face to face for discussions, that has become clear. The evidence is really encouraging. *The classroom vocational teacher together with the RVI teacher--that's what makes mainstreaming workable and valid.* Without RVI support, the vocational teacher couldn't do it; with that support--for any kid who needs it--the whole program works. Everybody gets appreciative of each others' efforts: the teachers, the RVIs, the kids. The more kids learn, the less the behavior problems and the greater everyone's success. And when the vocational teacher sees the handicapped kids begin to succeed, he or she gets more positive, turns around and starts to contribute to the RVI program's success.

Myra Thompson, Related Vocational Instruction Teacher,
Vidalia Comprehensive High School, Vidalia, Georgia

If you'd asked me a year ago how this would turn out I'd have said I wouldn't make it. I'd never done anything in vocational education, never taught anything but academics. Now I wouldn't trade this for anything, and everything I'm doing is related to vocational education.

Most of my students are in vocational classes in the morning, then they come into my classroom, usually just for one period a day. The rest of the time they're in other academic courses or with a special academic teacher.

We've got such variety in the things we do. For instance, we have several audio-visual machines that play filmstrips and cassettes that explain industrial processes, like tuning cars or welding. Students work at them on their own using headphones. We go to the different instructors and they tell us which programs the students need to watch. We have two sewing machines and I work with the home ec teacher to develop tasks for the students to practice. Mostly, the students prepare their own materials. One just made four posters to show different kinds of joints--corner joints, for example. Or the instructor will give me work samples and other materials to teach from.

We also have teaching machines with programs the students can respond to, like this one on arc welding. Then I use the skills checklists Doug helped me develop last summer. The girls who are sewing, for example, have to make a square and then stuff it. All the measurement, pattern-making, and sewing skills are broken down to check off so there's a complete record on what each student accomplishes.

I've learned so much, but I couldn't do it without the cooperation of the vocational instructors. This approach has helped solve our behavior problems, too. *The students are so involved in what they're doing they don't have time for anything but work. It makes things more pleasant all around and they really achieve things, see themselves as successes.*

Steve Weeks, Vocational Director, Vidalia Comprehensive High School, Vidalia, Georgia

When our teachers first heard about Doug's program they had a bad attitude. They'd heard all the bad stories, worried about having mongoloid students or slobbering kids and that there would be safety problems. Well, that's not what happened. Doug came along and changed their attitudes and showed them it could be done. He gave a six-week workshop our teachers attended and it made the difference. The in-service program lets everybody get their act together, get their attitudes right.

I'll tell you the truth, I had my doubts a year ago when it started out. But it's working now. We've even got trainable mentally retarded students; they're bused in from the TMR Center and we take them. Oh, we have little problems. One boy had eight new books on the table he was working on. The instructor told him to clean up, to put everything in the trash can, and he did--the new books and all. But they do learn, they can do it. We had one student who didn't talk at all, just wouldn't talk. Now he does, carries on a real conversation. There was a girl like that, too, a nontalker. She's one of our biggest success stories now. She got

our special CVA award last June and a thousand students got to their feet to applaud her. The award goes to the student making the biggest improvement. Another student wasn't even classified trainable; he couldn't do anything. His daddy asked us to take him and we gave him a summer job cutting grass. Now he's in school taking bricklaying and small engines plus two academic courses a day. We don't turn down any students and three school systems use our facility. We probably bus in 50 educable and trainable mentally retarded students.

I was really not in favor of this when Doug first came out, but he sure got us together. It seemed like they were putting so many things on us--CBAB, AOP Career Women. In the last five years there have been so many new vocational programs, we were just going from one grant to another trying to keep up with things. As a vocational administrator, it's my job to keep up with all these things. So then along comes this RVI program and I thought to myself, "Here's another of these giveaways; they've got more money than they know what to do with." Well, I thought we'd take it and if nothing else we might get some equipment out of it. That's how we got into it. Then Miss Thompson kept coming in here and telling us what it was all about, and her aide got interested and started making things, taking films and all that. Then we got serious about it and the other teachers got interested and started talking about it.

Mr. Hobbs down in masonry just ordered twenty more vocational training sets. He wouldn't be doing that if he hadn't gotten interested in working with these students, breaking the course down into basics. By doing that he's been able to help the other students, the regular students, too. They're benefiting because he sees things they've been missing now, things he just assumed they knew or would get on their own. So he's really streamlining his course and the regular students are getting as much out of it as the handicapped students. This program has just been a good thing all around. Brought in more money and we didn't have to add a single staff person, just one aide.

We want to have individual education plans (IEPs) for all our students eventually, for every student in the high school. We want IEPs because we have many high school students who don't have any idea what they want to do or where they're going or why they're taking what they do. They've been brainwashed to go to college. They've been told that college is the thing and they don't really know why. A bricklayer will make twice as much money as a college graduate will, but they don't know better. They really don't understand the academic requirements for particular skills and they don't realize the job market. They don't realize that when they get out of college their job situation is going to get worse. I'm really thrilled about going for IEPs to help all our other students.

You know, I quit school myself; I couldn't read or write or all this kind of good stuff. Kids from high school told me the only time I'd ever go to college was to visit a friend. That's true. I didn't read, and I didn't care about getting out of school. I made the lowest standard achievement test score in my high school class of 650 students. That's the truth.

I don't know why that was. I really don't know. I didn't care...they failed me when I was in fifth grade because I was reading one level below my grade level. I was older than everybody else. I didn't hate school, but I wasn't impressed with it. Even to this day I have a handicap; I handicapped myself. I still cannot spell anything. If I didn't have a secretary, I couldn't operate. I've spent years trying to get into a six-year program at one of these schools; and they've just let me take a written test. I asked them to give it to me orally because I could do so much better; my written English, grammar and this type of thing is so bad. But no, I had to take a written test. I took eight hours to do it and, after five years of trying, I finally got in. Now, I've been to college, I've made 80s--never had any problem doing the work, but there is a "score on tests." I'm labeled because I can't make this academic score; I don't get to go because somebody says that I'm not smart enough. Yet I prove it every day. And I *did* get my masters degree, but, to be honest with you, I couldn't get into the public college when I got out of high school, because I couldn't read. I went to Baptist Junior College; they let me in by the skin of my teeth, then taught me how to read. I had an English teacher there. She was seventy-three years old, and I went to her house every day. I got through college that way, got to graduate school.

My metals teacher can't get in a masters program because he can't pass the National Teachers' Exam. He's not teaching English or math; I want him to teach metals. I don't give a damn whether he is an English grammar expert or not. My wife, on the other hand, who's an elementary school teacher, can take the test and make a great score on it, because English is her major. She couldn't teach welding, yet they'd say that she's more qualified than him, and he's been working in the field all his life.

That's why we're really against labels here. Everybody's got some kind of limitation. But everybody doesn't have to come out the same. It isn't the things people can't do that are important, it's what they can do.

Special Education/ Rehabilitation/Vocational Education (SERVE) Program, White Bear Lake, Minnesota

“You can clobber people politically with one hand to get them moving, but then you have to come in with the other helping hand, give them the kind of assistance they need to get the job done.”

Charles Wrobel

The 916 Area Vocation Technical Institute is nationally known for its "zero demissions, integration and normalization philosophy for students with special needs." Its Special Education/Rehabilitation/Vocational Education (SERVE) Center has several components: a team of five supplemental resource instructors (SRIs) who provide tutoring, counseling, advocacy, and job-seeking support to special needs students, the SERVE Assessment Center where students are carefully evaluated and helped to explore a variety of career choices before actually enrolling in vocational courses, and a Related Special Instruction Program specifically designed to improve students' communications and mathematics skills. The entire program is designed, managed, and evaluated by an interdepartmental unit consisting of the director, the coordinator, and the supervisory secretary. SERVE operates both within the Vocational Technical Institute and as liaison to coordinate vocational education with the area schools from which the secondary students come, as well as community vocational services, and job entry.

Special needs students are placed widely among the fifty-five vocational skills areas offered and some 90 to 95 percent of them find employment on graduation. All courses are taught by individualized and personalized instruction, which does much to facilitate the complete integration of students with handicaps. In fiscal year 1977-1978, handicapped and disadvantaged high school students served numbered 131 for vocational assessment and 89 for supplemental resource instruction. (Total secondary school level enrollment at the Institute is about 1,100.) All students are accepted whatever their abilities and aptitudes; there is an established priority of accepting 20 percent special needs students.

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The 916 Area Vocational Technical is an impressive plant: big, modern, entirely barrier-free, well equipped, a modular building that can be rearranged to suit new needs, with attractive paneling and carpeting that gives it the look more of a corporate headquarters than a school. Some 2,800 secondary and postsecondary students attend the Institute each year; about 700 of them are handicapped and/or disadvantaged. Their focal point is the SERVE Center, where they receive vocational assessment, help with career exploration, and mainstreamed training in regular classrooms.

As with all model programs--and SERVE is one widely recognized--its special energy, its heartbeat--comes from the people who dreamed it up and who make it happen from day to day. The hub of this group is clearly Charles (Chuck) Wrobel, who initiated the SERVE concept when he was with Minnesota's East Metropolitan Special Education Council. Wrobel had over thirteen Handicapped Secondary Work Experience programs functioning in the East Metropolitan area when he was contacted by William C. Knaak, superintendent of the 916 area, who was designing, organizing, and building a vocational technical school in the same area as existing SERVE programs. Dr. Knaak was interested in using the SERVE concept in the new Area Vocational Technical Institute and expanding the services available to handicapped students. He and the school board, thus committed to integrating handicapped students, hired Chuck Wrobel to further develop the service delivery systems.

Minnesota's state vocational education system, like many others across the country, did not know what to do with their "10 percent funds" for special education. It was Chuck Wrobel, so long an advocate of the handicapped, who put together the Metro Area Advisory Board, drew on support groups, politicians and the community, and with them developed a highly individualized vocational education program for handicapped students. Now fully implemented, that program rejects no one and educates all who come to 916's doors.

Chuck Wrobel is a tough, practical man; members of his staff affectionately call him "part marine, part pussycat." He is singlemindedly dedicated to providing a fair chance and a good education for all young people. As far as he is concerned, there's no more need to make economic, social, or moral arguments for educating the handicapped: "The laws are on the books, so let's get on with it!"

After Wrobel discussed his personal outlook with me, I talked with Jerry Bauer, the SERVE Center coordinator. Then I went down to the assessment center, which can be seen in panoramic overview from an interior plate glass window next to Chuck's office. From that vantage point, I could see how the large space below is divided into small work areas equipped for an impressive array of program area assessments. I could identify some of the set-ups--sewing, automotive--but I had to descend a flight, into their midst, to recognize dental molding, upholstery, medical-technical tasks, electronics exercises and what seemed an almost endless selection of other skill areas.

Dennis Flescher who is in charge, showed me some of the step-by-step skill packets used to evaluate competencies and interests. One boy was learning the welt construction of a pillow cover in upholstery; a girl next to him practiced wood construction, spring-typing

webbing, and finishing. Other students were taking blood pressure, reading instruments, doing lab tests. A whole room to one side was devoted to business office skills, computers, and so on.

Gordon Williams' comments gave some perspective on handicapped students in regular classrooms from a vocational instructor's point of view. Finally, Connie Bohns offered her vital and personal approach to mainstreaming in the role of supplemental resource instructor.

Charles Wrobel, Manager, Area 916 SERVE Center,
White Bear Lake, Minnesota

Vocational education has not served all of its constituency well; has not opened its doors to serve everyone as they come. Any student who wants to try our program can try it. Included in the wide variety of handicapped kids at the [Vocational Technical] Institute right now, about twenty trainable mentally retarded kids are going through with a full-time aide and some backup staff. Maybe we're getting the cream of the crop among kids labeled TMR; they don't seem that retarded to me.

At the Institute, the dropout rate for handicapped students is about one-third what it is for the others. That statistic surprised us when we discovered it--it made a lot of believers out of board members and people in the community. On jobs, handicapped kids' attendance is better; I've even had them refuse a vacation for fear their job would be gone when they got back.

I don't have any quarrel with purchasing services when needed, but it's not all that difficult to set up programs in high schools, providing people are committed. I like setting up programs, showing people it can be done. You can clobber people politically with one hand to get them moving, but then you have to come in with the other helping hand, give them the kind of technical assistance they need to get the job done. Back when I was with rehab, I set up technical assistance teams that went right into the community, became part of the local scene, got to know their trainees, and let them flounder for a while, then came back with more assistance until a good program developed. You have to stick with it; this isn't short-term consulting but a long-term commitment to help a system establish itself and become a service delivery mechanism. I think our consulting model in education has been a disaster.

I've been an expert on vocational education for the handicapped all over the country; I've done over 100,000 miles in the air, bombing in on people for a day or two, then leaving town. I'm not sure I did all that much good,

and in some cases I probably frustrated the hell out of people by showing them programs that work, then leaving them to wonder how on earth they could create their own.

I've spent time in voc ed rehab, special ed, and industry, but really I'm just a rooter for handicapped people; I like helping them. If ballet were the answer for them, I'd take ballet and get certified in that--teach ballet if it helped them survive in this world. It's always been that way for me. I had a friend, a neighbor--Ed and I used to climb trees together. He was an epileptic and would sometimes fall out with a seizure. That was before we had special ed classes and the handicapped kids were integrated with the rest of us. Then there was my sister, Joyce. She was retarded, but she always had a job because my parents were in the restaurant business. Now she's thirty-eight, married with a couple of kids. She made it despite the education system.

My interest in the educational system is as an advocate for handicapped kids. I'm not widely loved and adored; advocacy can make you a dangerous species! Politicians worry about me. Parent advocate groups for the handicapped, on the other hand, really crank me up with support.

The SERVE program integrates and normalizes handicapped kids; mainstreams them no matter what their disabilities. We have seven interpreters on staff for the deaf kids. *Equipment modification is no big problem; you have to modify minds more than equipment.* Vocational teachers have heard all the horror stories about handicapped kids and are scared. But I'm a manipulator, and there are always ways to get people to do things that need to be done. Some people call it "management by objectives."

Manipulating your environment is important--and it's no different for a handicapped kid. It's just that they never quite seem to develop the skills other people develop in terms of manipulating their environment to meet their needs. That's where they need a little bit of help from us. The most successful handicapped kids I've seen are those off the streets; kids with street skills. They've dealt with hard knocks in life. Now give them some vocational skills and they do all right. They're survivors. The kids I worry about are the over-protected middle-class kids from lily-white communities. But they do learn from their peers, and when you put one of those into an integrated program for a year or two, he'll pick up a lot of street skills, survival skills. I know their value; I came off the streets myself. Ran off at sixteen, lied about my age to join the military, did political science college work through the military, then came out and drove a truck, bartended, cooked, went back to college. The way I see it, life is essentially a bowl of pits for handicapped kids; you know someone else ate the cherries. I'm kind of a student of John the Baptist--expect to get beheaded--but I enjoy walking amongst my handicapped kids, teaching them survival, seeing them get their share.

Jerry Bauer, Coordinator of the SERVE Center

On a yearly average, our SERVE Center provides vocational assessment, career exploration, integrated training and job-seeking job-placement and job-keeping support for about 700 handicapped and disadvantaged students, secondary and postsecondary. My job is to keep it all together as a smooth flow of services.

We've always been a mainstream school that doesn't reject anyone. Every student, with no matter what handicap or disadvantage, can come in the door and demand a program. Even if they can't succeed according to all the paper and pencil tests, we will provide all the services necessary to help them succeed. Given time and an individualized curriculum, any student can realize his or her potential. Of our handicapped and disadvantaged students, 90 to 95 percent find employment when they complete the program. Some require several placements and a lot of follow-up, but we're very pleased with our record. The administrative support of the program of the mainstreaming philosophy has always been there and because of that our Institute has developed into one of the unique vocational education schools in the country.

Our handicapped students are pretty evenly distributed over all the trade areas that aren't highly technical and they tend to do well because our initial assessment is careful. The tasks in each vocational classroom are broken down so each student can proceed at his or her own pace. Evaluation is competency based; students can take performance and written tests, or provide oral tests for those who can't read. Supplemental Resource Instructors (SRIs) work with the students and teachers to make work.

Some students come through not wanting anything to do with our program; they've been dumped here by their home school, or by mom and dad, and they let us know they aren't happy about it. It's a last resort kind of thing, you know, and some of them fight us all the way. But one of the things we offer students is an avenue of success, rather than failure. The SRIs and the rest of our staff will help the student reach his optimal level if he's at all willing. Some days there don't seem to be any rewards in this business; you can't get too ego-involved. But we do have feelings of accomplishment, and we enjoy working with these handicapped kids much as a carpenter enjoys working with fine woods--not that the kids are our product so much, but that we really enjoy being with them, understanding them, appreciating them.

Dennis Flescher, Assessment Center, Area 916 SERVE Center, White Bear Lake, Minnesota

We don't use commercially produced work sample batteries much, because they tend to be too general. We prefer using materials that come directly from our classroom

instructors. They lend us equipment, or we purchase equipment identical to what they use, so students can become familiar with the operations they'd actually encounter here in training. We depend very heavily on our instructors for input into the assessment program, for actual task requirements that will familiarize students with the work and help in assessment. After four to six weeks in evaluation with us, students go into a four-week program trial. Then the instructor gives us feedback on whether the student likes the program and works well in it. There's a conference with staff and parents to determine what the student likes and doesn't like, what kinds of support services will be needed in tutoring, job-seeking, whatever is needed to make the student employable.

We're equipped to assess students for about fifty of the fifty-five programs offered here. We let students try any of them they like, although we try to help them be realistic if, say, their math scores are really low and they choose a high-math program like biomedical or audio/visual repair. We'd let them know they'd be spending most of their time catching up on the math by letting them do a lot of math projects from that area during assessment. We use interest tests, so if the students want to try auto mechanics, for example, they can try tire-changing and balancing or using the tune-up manual. For each area we've got an introductory packet. A student could try up to twenty different programs during the assessment phase--then we'd narrow it down to two or three for actual classroom trial. Some try four or five before they pick one finally; a few decide they don't like any and go back to their parent high schools. If they want to come back the following year, we're very flexible.

The SERVE Assessment Center is set up for incoming handicapped and disadvantaged students, but an instructor can refer any student here for interest testing or other assessment.

We're trying to expand job options for the more severely handicapped students. One way is to give partial certificates in areas they can't complete. Some of our trainable mentally retarded students are expanding into the service station program, apparel arts, machinist's helper, rather than the more likely programs such as building care and food services, where they tend to find jobs more easily. With the individualized education system, we can really break the tasks down into detailed steps and select tasks that can be learned for partial certification. We developed program analysis materials to help the instructors a couple of years ago, and encouraged them to take on students who might not complete the full program. The Institute's main goal is still to graduate students who complete full programs, but our flexibility with partial certificates enables us to be successful with more students, trained for particular jobs.

Once we place a handicapped student in a program, the teacher still has an SRI--a Supplemental Resource Instructor--for support all along, so there's less tendency now to let a student slide along without help. A few months before graduation, our SRIs help students with resumé writing and job-seeking. Then there are reading and math teachers who can be called in for special help, and conferences can be called to see what else may be needed. A lot of people have an eye out for each student. We feel this kind of assessment and follow-up is very important in lowering the dropout rate.

Gordon Williams, Director of the Technical Laboratories Department, Area 916 SERVE Center, White Bear Lake, Minnesota

There are a few things we've had to change physically for handicapped people, like drafting tables that adjust electronically, but those are easy to take care of. The handicapped people showing up in our classes really aren't that different. Sometimes their attitudes differ, but we're psychologically geared for that, and they advance as well as the others. You have to set slower progress rates sometimes--when a student with a bad back is on painkillers that slow him down, for example--but our individualized education approach takes care of that. Some of the handicapped people are really fantastic, the way they go through our programs. Of course, we don't label them, so often I couldn't even point them out to you, unless it was a deaf student using sign language or something that makes it obvious. *They're so built into our system, we really don't think of them as handicapped. After all, I have handicaps as much as the people who are labeled "handicapped." Maybe nobody should be identified that way.*

What we do with support services is to identify people making slower progress than others. Computerized progress data on each student tell us what's needed in terms of support tutoring in math or reading skills, or any other kind of help, without identifying students handicapped. Interpreters for the deaf are about the only special assistance we provide. Some of the classroom teachers have to get used to working with deaf students, using paper communication if they don't know sign language. Or they have to adjust to letting students go slower. I got over a big hurdle with one of the instructors just last week; we finally came to an understanding that was really a revelation to him: that the student simply needed extra time to go through a test and an interpreter to help him understand it--not to help on the test, but to communicate the questions. Now the instructor and the student are no longer uptight about it and the whole situation is calmed down. The student is passing tests, which he wasn't before.

I'm not sure where one should draw lines if students aren't making progress in a program, a trade. If a student is progressing at only one-quarter the usual rate, how long should we let him or her keep trying? Two or three out of about 700 students seem to me to have set their sights too high, and they've come and talked to me about it. They have physical handicaps from accidents that kept them out of school so they were educationally deprived, and they're still on painkilling drugs that slow them down. I work with them on realistic goals.

I've always liked mentally retarded kids. Back in the early sixties I was an industrial arts teacher and the trainable and educable retarded kids were mainstreamed right into my classes. The school didn't know what else to do with them and I'd have two or three in each class; I enjoyed working with them a lot. I remember one of them; he had a super artistic talent. He was retarded, but he also had palsy, which made it difficult for him to draw.

I minored in institutional therapy in college, occupational skills for the mentally ill. I'm not sure where the interest came from initially, but my Dad was a school principal, a very effective educator. He worked well with handicapped people, exposed me to the idea early. And psychology always interested me, curiosity about myself, my place in the universe.

Connie Bohns, Supplemental Resource Instructor (SRI) in Health Occupations, Area 916 SERVE Center, White Bear Lake, Minnesota

The SRI's function is to assist any student who has a special need of any kind. It could be tutoring, liaison with instructors, curriculum development, counseling. But we're not really counselors, we just do a lot of talking to a lot of students--helping them through critical periods, setting up support. My official caseload, last count, was handicapped and/or disadvantaged. But I also deal with students not on my caseload. There's really no way to keep track of everyone we deal with in the course of a year; it would be impossible, and I don't know that it would do any good to try. I deal with people, not numbers.

Not that the paperwork doesn't have to be done; there's plenty of it and I often have to take it home nights to be sure it gets done. Even though I'm people oriented--political, task oriented--I developed a computerized accountability system myself for the whole state. Took a leave of absence for two years to do that, to develop it from nothing. We never really had a data base before. Now we have entry data on each student, middle data and follow-up data with crossover to other information systems.

On a daily basis, I'd have to say the biggest question I get is "How can four SRIs deal with such large numbers of students effectively?" And I'd answer that you can deal with many more situations than you think if you use the right tactics. You have to have commitment from the top--the administration--as well as from the bottom up, and you have to work very extensively with the instructors, do a lot of public relations work, a lot of "in-service" work, much as that term's been beat to death. You do a lot of talking, a lot of trading. In the end you get the instructors to do a great deal of work they never thought they could do, and you support them in doing it. It's direct and indirect service at the same time: you support the instructor to support the student. As a student advocate, I have to keep up with the law, get people to do what should be done, help overcome their fears, and do other down-to-earth kinds of things.

You can deal with tremendous numbers of people by getting others to do things, to be more committed themselves to solving the problems they encounter. Then they stop seeing them as problems and start dealing with situations they never thought they could deal with before. In the past, we've always referred students with special problems away from the classroom--picked them out, put them somewhere else, tutored them, and sent them back or kept them away altogether--if they were let in in the first place. I seldom pull students out of classrooms. I even tutor in the classroom setting, getting other students to participate. Kids will bargain: "You trade me for this; I'll trade you for that." *Getting students to work with peers creates good feelings and self-confidence in all of them. It's important to let students volunteer their services, rather than continually asking them for help. They'll do that if you approach them in a context where everyone gets something out of it, where there are trades. We have to be careful not to keep picking the most advanced students and leaving out those less advanced but willing to give of their knowledge to someone else, which, in turn, builds up their self-confidence so they progress faster. You have to build a system of give and take among all the people involved; teach them when to say "no," when to recruit others, how to recognize feelings, how to get maximum participation all around.*

A lot of my work has to do with settings--creating them. I suppose it's apparent from the way I dress that I'm not part of "the establishment." If I came to school dressed like most of the instructors, the primary instructors, and spent most of my time with them instead of with the kids, I couldn't accomplish what I do. I'd be looked upon as something other than what I am. All the SRIs, even though we have our individual styles, approach things from the direction of students; our approaches may differ, but we all have the same basic idea of how things should be done. Often in tenuous situations, out here hanging on a limb, making decisions as problems come up. If we make a wrong decision, we're the ones who pay the consequences.

I didn't expect to do this kind of work when I came here. I had a special education degree and planned to work with mentally retarded kids, but when they asked if I were interested in being an SRI in health occupations, I wasn't at all sure. I was in active duty in the military for three years as a dental technician, cross-rated as a medic, so I had some experience with the health occupations, but there was only one other SRI in the whole building, and the job seemed enormous. They hired one for Tech Labs and one for Allied Services soon after. Al, the other SRI, and I developed a short in-service session for staff meetings so that instructors would get a better idea of what it means to be handicapped. We talked about all the myths and about how to deal with situations that arise in class without sending the kid out on referral.

There are so many myths about kids labeled mentally retarded, for instance: that they're crazy, bounce off walls, can't learn or function, can't read, just lip off all the time. We tried to dispel those ideas by giving the instructors real life examples. From Winston Churchill to Flip Wilson, there are so many famous people who were considered failures in their youth, slow, very poor learners. If there had been "EMR" and "TMR" labels then, they'd have been used probably to describe those people. It took a lot of public relations work with instructors to get them to understand what special needs are and what we SRIs would be doing.

I hate labels; I hate them. What do "EMR" labels tell you? They don't tell me how the labeled students function. They don't tell me what they can learn, or whether I need extra patience with a particular student; they don't really tell me anything useful. It took me until I was twenty-five to overcome the stigma of my own label, "Incorrigible." I got it at the age of fourteen; I was sent to reform school. It took a whole lot of individuals concerned with my well-being, who went after me hard for a lot of years, to get over that if I have--I'm still in perpetual trouble! I love the chaos of this job. I don't know what I'd do with myself if things were quiet and "normal." When I first tried to get into school to be a dental hygienist, I was turned down. My high school transcript was all Fs. That doesn't make it, you know, just doesn't cut the mustard. I didn't even really want to be a dental hygienist, but I was working for this dentist because I needed the money, and it was all I knew how to do. When you need money bad enough, you can sell yourself as anything. I went into the navy at eighteen; that kept me off the streets. It was good training and provided security, but when I came out I bummed again. Didn't actually go to college until I was twenty-five. And it's only now that I'm doing what I really love doing.

There are still instructors we have to win over, who object to having handicapped kids in their classrooms, though they have come to a point where it's at least a tolerable situation. The one instructor I had the biggest problems with, Ken, is now our biggest advocate. He's the lead instructor in our orthotics and prosthetics program; he started it. Didn't want any handicapped kids; now he's the biggest advocate for every kind of special needs student! We managed to get a young man into Ken's program who was learning disabled, almost a nonreader, with perception problems, all kinds of problems. We kind of buffaloed Ken into taking him into the program, and it took the young man twenty-two months to learn half the skills, but he's now employed as a prosthetics technician at the University of North Dakota and doing very well. He'll come back this year so we can coach him for the national exam, help him with the reading, you know, that sort of thing. He's very good, despite his disability. Ken gets up in staff meetings now, gets on his soap box and just rants and raves as an advocate. I don't even have to get on mine anymore; he does it for me! And it's better coming from him than me, because he's one of the instructors and can speak to the others, the ones who are compelled at first to take on handicapped students. They start with little more than tolerance, but that's just a beginning. Eventually we know they'll come across with more.

Support Services Program, Career Education Center, Denver, Colorado

“I think we’ve got, right now, a program that reaches our goal: if you walk through here, unless the kid has a very discernible handicap, you would not be able to tell that this youngster was different than anybody else.”

Irv Moskowitz

The Career Education Center in Denver, Colorado, exists as a support facility for Denver's high schools. Its purpose is to offer a wide variety of career-oriented learning experiences in a setting that "permits learning," rather than "teaches." Of its 1200 students from grades 10 through 12, about sixty have various identified handicaps, including sensory impairments, mental retardation, physical disabilities, learning and emotional disorders. All are mainstreamed in regular classes.

The Support Services Program is staffed by one teacher, a part-time tutor, and a tutor-interpreter for deaf students. They provide supportive assistance including vocational-related language and math tutoring, appropriate class placement, materials and equipment modification, liaison with home school special education teachers, and counseling. In addition to the identified handicapped students, some twenty-five academically disadvantaged students are also served by the program.

Handicapped students are referred to the CEC through IEP (individual education plan) committee procedures and select their CEC vocational area with the help of career counselors and support teams. Close monitoring by the CEC's support services teacher facilitates any necessary changes.

Support Services maintains a room with individual study areas, group study area, reinforcement area (lounge-type relaxation space), and teacher work area, as well as resource materials and equipment.

The program is new (in its second semester as described herein) and is expected to grow significantly in the coming years.

Address inquiries to:
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The CEC is the kind of school any youngster would be lucky to attend. Besides the obvious fact that the large modern white brick plant is well equipped for both vocational and cultural programs, the CEC radiates an atmosphere of friendly dignity and optimism about human achievement. Irv Moskowitz is the school's principal,--much as he denies it--the entire school is an extension of his philosophy and personality. There is simply no sense here of any human limitations that people can't help each other cope with successfully. I found myself thinking that if all schools in our country were like this one, our entire culture would be profoundly changed, for at the very heart of the CEC there is respect and love for every student, teacher, and staff person.

The CECs program for mainstreaming students with handicaps is still new, and Irv reflects some of the staff's initial anxieties, together with real accomplishments. Despite the remarkable job Connie Zajac is now doing as the sole support services teacher, it is hard to imagine that she will not need additional staff as the program expands in future years. Kramer James, Jim Nordlander, and Agnes Foster were only a few of the vocational teachers with whom I spoke, but the views and experiences they share are representative.

Irv Moskowitz, Principal, Career Education Center (CEC), Denver, Colorado

A year or two ago, we were very frightened and wary of this whole idea of bringing kids with handicaps into our Center. It wasn't discriminatory in any way; it was a matter of our fears. We were not prepared, didn't know what to expect, and when they came the question was, well, what do we do? Interestingly enough, our deepest fears were aroused with just one kid: the first kid who was so obviously handicapped, retarded, but whose mother demanded that she come to this school. Being a public institution, we acknowledge citizens' requests. So this girl comes here--I bring up this isolated case because it probably was our benchmark--and we look at her. It frightens us even more because she's staring vacantly into space, and she's going to be in a learning area, the restaurant where she's going to be leering, perhaps, at customers--or tripping or falling or breaking things, or slobbering--turning our customers off. We have a food service program that doesn't serve kids; it serves people off the street. Well, these things were raw projections; indeed she didn't do all those things. Sure, she stared a little bit, but we found out that we were able to do things for her, and with her, without expensive training. And we found out that we were more prejudiced than we thought. However, the kids who worked around her were not prejudiced, and so she found herself with friends here. She also made friends on the staff, because they found out she's an okay kid and liked her. She was really mainstreamed very quickly, because kids were helping her and accepting her. The biggest thing, I think, was accepting her. They really knew who she was; it didn't have to be advertised. We didn't have to have any special meetings with kids behind closed doors with her excluded. We didn't have to say, "Look, she's going to be here, and we must all do it together." They just went in and helped this kid. I bring this up as a very simple example of where we were.

I probably was more frightened than anybody else because of the general proprietary viewpoint that a principal has about his building or his program. As much as I try to deny that, I'm right in there and I figured, well, this influx of kids with handicaps will be coming and they're going to change the whole atmosphere here, the whole environment. Oh, we had had a blind kid before

this, but that was nothing more than our token handicap. The blind kid with a cane doing great things. Small engines. He could take apart a small engine and put it back together again, that kind of thing. We could show him off. The blind kid could have been somebody's pet. But the retarded kid is usually not that appealing, if we're really honest about this.

Well, now the stresses were coming on from legislation and from pressure groups and advisory groups throughout the city. The school system had to start taking in a lot more handicapped kids and doing something for them. We were all alert to this now. Our experience with the young lady who was mentally retarded wasn't all that bad and we felt all right. The next semester we got a group of handicapped kids in and we did find some problems. The kids weren't really identified for us beforehand, and we had to do the identification.

That's what happened, because there was a tremendous push in the school system. *We had to get mobilized before we were ready. It wasn't a question of dumping or anything; it was truly a question of disorganization, with so many problems all of a sudden.* There are kids in the school district who are eighteen and need to be diapered--and suddenly this fell upon the Denver public schools. Oh, they had special education all along; the kids were isolated with special teachers and so on, but that wouldn't do any more.

Actually, we did not get any trainable mentally retarded kids, TMRs, and we still don't have any with severe, severe deficiencies, though I don't doubt there'll be a time when we'll be looking this way, too. Anyway, we started getting more handicapped kids, but we were not told they were coming and our teachers were asking what to do. So we made a plan. We said, "Look, this is it; we're going to be getting kids with handicaps and special needs, and we'd better get going and get ready to do something with them."

I made a decision not to go out looking for a lot of help. I decided not to get very expert first, but to have the spirit first. Because the spirit is what I thought--what a group of us thought--was really necessary. Never mind all the technical expertise. So I took Connie Zajac, a teacher here, from her regular teaching assignment and made her a full-time person to develop a model for receiving these kids, identifying them, working with them and their parents and their other teachers, getting them placed nicely in the building, and then finally placing them in jobs.

Connie's a business education teacher with credentials in special education, and that's what she's doing full time now--providing support services for our handicapped students. From this little beginning of willingness we moved into this semester, when we have not ten kids but sixty handicapped kids here now, and these kids are

thoroughly mainstreamed throughout the school. Our teachers have accepted them, and they have help when they want it. They have tutorial help for the kids, plenty of help as professionals, and whatever else is needed.

I think we've got, right now, a program that reaches our goal, which was unstated at first: that if you walk through here, unless the kid has a very discernible physical handicap, you would not be able to tell that this youngster is different from anybody else. I really think that now you won't know it, because they're right in the middle of the pack, in whatever class they're in. Walking through, you'd be hard put to find out who is the kid with special needs and who is not. And they don't feel ostracized, they feel accepted. That's proven by the fact that we're going to finish the first semester of our new program without any problems that stand out dramatically. The kids are helped by other kids, they're accepted by other kids, and they're accepted by their teachers. They feel their place is in this school.

We didn't have to get very scientific and technical to make it work; we just had to want to make it work. And we also didn't want to have any outside funding help. The reason we didn't want to go that route is because we just didn't want to work to meet guidelines or any kind of specifications that might not fit our school or fit the kids that are here. So we decided to do this number ourselves. And we are. It's not costing us extra. You know what we're getting? As a kind of little gift, we have a tutor--an hourly tutor, part-time, that comes with some kind of funds from outside. If we didn't get that, we'd provide the tutorial help anyway; there are plenty of volunteers for that. We don't have to put up a nickel. *We can get volunteer help from staff, community, or kids--whatever is necessary. We can get volunteer help down the line. So, indeed, we are saying that this program is costing us nothing. All it cost us was the willingness, and that spirit's here.*

Our support services come mainly through this one person who's working fulltime--Connie. Now if you want to say that costs us money, sure; a teacher always costs money, but she was here already; we just reassigned her. We have seven deaf kids, and we do have an interpreter for these kids; that's supplied by the school district.

There's a girl who works in our baking class--she's jolly, happy, normal--everything you want to ascribe to your fund kid, who learns and so on. Until she starts talking. When she starts talking she uses words like "Daddy" and "jammies"--you know, little primary, pre-school talk sometimes. I know nothing about this kind of thing; I have no background in special education. But I thought, what a surprise to see this kid learning; she's baking, she's putting it together, she's looking for a job now. She'll be placed by us, part time or full time, as soon as she graduates. This kid makes me feel very, very good. She has fit into this school; she's

accepted by everybody in the school and she is not different in any way. Until, of course, she starts speaking. But her performance is there. She can perform; she's learned that. Her teacher has no special education background. He can't identify all the labels, the initials that are attached to these kids. No, he's a man who owned a bakery, who was extremely successful in the city, probably had the most successful bakery in the whole city. This man sold his business and decided to work as a teacher and share his skills. He is over sixty years old, comes from Europe originally, knows how to bake, and smile, and put his arm around the kid, and pass on what he knows to somebody, and accept and be patient. So she loves her class, she loves her teacher, she's learning something, she's part of something, and here she is with this man, whose only magic is that he cares. I'm sure that when she walked in the door, he wasn't all that sure she was different from anybody else.

What I want to bring out here is that I think we can get terribly analytical about perceptual handicaps, right-left versus left-right, and all these kinds of things. Yet, there are just millions of kids with such conditions who learn to sit on someone's lap and read that way. I hope I'm not being ultrasimple, or generalizing to the point of foolishness, but what I want to communicate is that I think when the spirit is there, the willingness is there, we don't need all that training. We just have to care and try. I'm sure the training is nothing we would disdain, because we're looking forward to having some special in-service here in the spring, some heavier in-service training for us that I think will make us better yet. *Still, the key ingredient is not what we know but what we feel about these kids.* That's what's making it happen.

Where did so many deprived kids in the United States learn to read? Did they all have the reading booths and the reading specialists? We've become a nation of technicians and scientific methods. You really need a score card to know who's on first when you deal with special ed people, because you can't even keep up with the initials. SIEBD, Significantly Impaired something, SLICs--I threw a paper away yesterday that had about six of those and looked like it was from some United Nations economic conference going on in Geneva. I mean, they're kids. Well, anyway, that's my point on that. We will, this spring, have an in-service workshop because we're scheduled for so many different kinds of handicaps in this building. We're going to bring in a program with a key speaker, and then we're going to have our specialists come in and run little groups. Our teachers will rotate, maybe fifteen to twenty minutes in each group, and they'll spend time with these specialists just to get an idea about how these programs are done by the experts--how they look at it. And maybe we'll have some adults who are also handicapped to join these experts and talk about

personal experiences in school, about people reacting to them. We need to go in a bit deeper, to learn more ourselves.

I really don't know what else we'll need in the future. Would it be better if we had six Connies? I honestly don't know. We're loaded with people we can call on in this school district; that's no problem.

We have a wonderful school here, too, and that makes everything easier. *It's much more than a vocational center; you'll find all the soft careers here. We regard the pursuit of interests as legitimate; what you do after work is as important as what you do at work. This is our philosophy.* We have media, theater, dance, music, art. And you won't find kids running through the halls shouting; you won't find obscenities written on the walls, or vandalism. You won't see insubordination to teachers. And it's not because of discipline; we don't regulate things prison-fashion. You won't even hear a bell ring here; students can tell time. That's part of building responsible behavior in people, having them learn to get places on time. If you can't tell when it's ten of, what will you do when you go to work? Anyway, it's a nice place to be.

There are all kinds of kids here; some of them probably should be incarcerated, others should probably be in their third year of college--that's the kind of range we have. It's important to deal with all kinds of people. Right now our school district has a lot of Vietnamese people coming in, and we're trying to get used to their customs.

When we are ignorant, when we don't understand differences, we conjure up all kinds of projections about how much trouble people will be. Simple as my example of the retarded girl was, she showed us something very important. What were we afraid of? You know, I really would hate to see schools, faculties, get all technically oriented to educating the handicapped before we become spiritually oriented. Why do we analyze, dissect the handicaps people have, before we talk about the people?

I want to tell a teacher: "Here's another person. Let's find out if he needs help; let's find out how to help him." I don't know if our approach is valid. We have problems. But they aren't the kind that stick out. I feel very, very lucky because our attitude just seems to make things work. It isn't that we overcome kids' handicaps; we just deal with them. We provide our teachers with small enough classes so they can sit down with a kid who needs extra help. We don't pull the kid out to a separate room and have them start over on "Run, Spot, Run." We provide tutorial help on the material used in the class, right there in the same room whenever possible.

Our support services staff, as I said, is just Connie, a tutor, and the interpreter for the deaf kids. I really believe the rest should come from the teachers themselves. I want teachers who care about kids and who don't call in experts until they've tried everything at their disposal and truly don't know what else to do. I don't want labels, I don't want experts until we've done our number. I believe we can give it one heck of a try before we yell for help.

Connie Zajac, Support Services Teacher, CEC, Denver, Colorado

It was a lot of work, at the beginning of this year. We had to get fifty students identified, get baseline information on them, working with ten home high schools and a couple of private and parochial schools to coordinate services. It's an enormous communication job. I had to get the vocational teacher and the special ed teacher from the home school together to talk about the student and see what should be done this year in each case.

A lot of the kids came here unidentified, either because they slipped through or because the home school special education teacher thought labeling them would program them for failure. In this category especially were those students considered to have IPCDs (identifiable perceptual communicative disorders) and SIEBDs (significant identifiable emotional behavior disorders). What happened was that they were referred through our program for the academically disadvantaged. The teacher didn't know the student couldn't read or had a learning disability. As a classroom teacher, I know that with some students it can be difficult to tell whether there's a motivational problem, whether the kid is lazy, or whether there's a real disability; and I think teachers should have this information. If the student has a problem, we can give him or her appropriate support services right away, rather than waiting for the student to fail before getting any assistance. Some of the kids, like those classified as SLIC (severely limited intellectual capacity) may need a lot of academic support; others, like a young man with multiple sclerosis who is in a motorized wheel chair, don't need any. All he needed was an elevator key and a ramp. We also assist our deaf students in different ways--some need an interpreter almost full time; others need someone to take notes for them or tutor them.

Our handicapped students are enrolled in every vocational class offered here and in several of the academic and art classes. As for class placement, we made some suggestions based on skills assessment, but for the most part placement was based on each student's interests and abilities as well as the judgment of the teacher-coordinator in the home high school. In some of the areas we're careful. When the teacher-coordinator calls me and indicates that

she has a student who's interested in food service, for example, I'm fairly careful if I know that there are already three or four students in there, because we don't want to overload any one class and have only handicapped students in that class. That could happen easily in some of the classes here, but we would like to keep a balance so that the classes are really integrated.

The handicapped students are enrolled in business, carpentry, construction, electrical, bricklaying, drafting, plumbing, childhood education, chef's training, machine trades, welding, retailing, cycles and small engines, automotive, commercial art and graphic communications classes. We had two in photography, but neither of them were able to make it. There was one in radio broadcasting, but she dropped out because of her attendance, not for academic reasons. Computer math, voice, and audio engineering also have handicapped students. As far as I know, this is the only school in Colorado that has the academic and arts classes together with the vocational classes. That's Irv's philosophy about what career education is and we're a career education center. It's a well-rounded education philosophy, that kids should be able to see, to be exposed to all the possibilities in life, whether they go on working in them or not. A lot of our programs are not state reimbursed, or federally funded from the vocational education act, so we can have programs that are based on the needs and interests of the students instead of on the ideas of somebody who feels that all the classes should be vocational education and strict job training.

We do have a job placement counselor and a career fair here at the end of each year. That's a major event, where very large numbers of employers come onto our campus to interview students, and it's a real success. I'd say that most of the job placement is done by the individual vocational instructors. When Irv and I talked about what my job would be earlier on, he felt that part of it would include job placement. At this point, what's been done as far as job placement goes is that we've developed a relationship between vocational, special ed, and vocational rehabilitation, and the three of us work together on job placement. We're communicating with each other; we all have different kinds of contacts. I've also been in touch with a lot of the large employers in town and have alerted them to the fact that we have handicapped youngsters who will be looking for jobs--a public service company, Mountain Bill, the large banks in town, Samsonite, who's a big employer, and others. I've talked with their personnel people, and their initial responses are really great. Through teacher-coordinators in the home schools, some of the students have part-time jobs now that are related to their training programs.

Last year, before the end of school, we went around and talked with each one of the vocational teachers asking what information he or she wanted about the handicapped students. We developed an information sheet based on these requests. This sheet provides information about reading level, math level, and learning disabilities, as well as other basic information about the students. That helps us in starting to work with them. It doesn't provide all the information; it doesn't work in every case; but it gives us some basis for starting. It also is a basis for the vocational teacher and the special ed teacher in the home school to have some communication, and it helps us in support services.

Our support services vary, of course, with the individual student. One of the students I work with every afternoon, because she comes two sessions. If she didn't, she wouldn't be able to pass the class, because she works at a very slow rate. She's mentally retarded and also severely epileptic. We have talked with her and the school nurse has talked with her; she's seen films, and we've had people from the Epilepsy Foundation come in to talk with her about the epilepsy, which I think is more debilitating in her case than the mental retardation is. And then there is a young man who, in addition to mental retardation, is emotionally disturbed. We talk a lot about how he might handle his anger in the food service situation. Technically that isn't my job, because I'm supposed to concentrate on academic problems, but the students we're helping on academic tasks will all of a sudden talk about their personal problems--you know, emotional kinds of things. When a student does that, I don't want to say to him, "Well, go see the counselor across the hall." We deal with such problems as they come up.

Our classes each last two hours and forty-five minutes, and that's a long time; different behaviors come out here, I think, than come out at the home school. Irv feels very strongly that the teachers should provide all the support services up to the point of desperation--not call in someone else, but learn to deal with the human, rather than just the academic aspects of students. Most of our teachers do that; they've really been receptive. You know, they have problems and ask, "What are we supposed to do with this kid?"--or they say, "He isn't working up to capacity," but I think we look at it as everyone learning together, and nobody having all the answers. I just got into the program this year and many of the vocational teachers haven't had handicapped youngsters in their classes before, so, with the tutor-interpreter, and with the tutor and myself, we try to work on it together, and do the best we can with it. *Many of the vocational instructors don't call on us; they can handle it themselves without any additional help. And if they do need help, on a one-time basis, or for a week or whatever, then they call on us and we assist in whatever way we can. I don't think there's been a lot of resistance; at least I don't encounter much of it.*

Kramer James, Machine Shop Vocational Teacher, CEC,
Denver, Colorado

I've had special ed kids in classes even before I came here, had them in a machine shop program in the high school where I used to teach. I just treat them like regular students. They learn slower than the other kids, but if you work with them and help them, they're no different than anybody else. I had one fellow I was really proud of. This kid was kicked out of school three or four times. He was in special ed and they said he'd never make it outside. He graduated at nineteen, right out of my machine shop, and now he's running a building maintenance program for public service and earns a good salary. Another one is working with a commercial medical company here in Denver, making \$7.00 an hour. He's been on the job a year. Another is head of the drill press department at MCD Enterprises, and I've got one working at Sun Strand. He couldn't read well, but he was great at math. Now he's going to college part time and working. Let's see, then there's one who had a lot of family problems and was special ed, too--he's in the maintenance program at RTV.

Right here in the class now I've got a couple. One of them just made four complete sets of machine parts this morning; they were fantastic. We work out of a module, a learning module, and before a kid goes from one area to another area on a machine, he has to do a certain amount of reading. What's really great is these people upstairs, like Connie, are doing a real good job with these kids. If one of the kids needs help, I call Connie in when I can't spend the extra time. You know, a lot of my regular students need as much help as the special ed kids.

We really like our kids. A lot of people seem to forget that special ed kids are people; they try to treat them as if they're something different, and they're not. They just want to be treated like other people, and often they get let down. I don't understand why people look down on special ed kids, how people can feel they're less than other kids. What's the difference if a student is academically slow in two or three areas if he's really excelling in others? All my kids like machine shop and they do great in it.

I really think the main thing is teachers have to like kids to work with them. If they do, they'll get along with the kids and the kids will get along with each other. All my special ed kids are accepted by their peers. In fact, I've got special ed kids helping new kids, and this really makes them feel good. If one of the slow kids knows an area and a new kid comes in, I let him familiarize the new kid with it. That makes him feel a thousand miles high; it makes a kid feel big, really builds confidence. Especially kids who have been locked up in one room with one teacher for so long--I use vile language when I talk about that kind of thing.

The only help we need generally is with reading and math. Having people like Connie for that gives us more time to spend on mechanics. The help in this school is fantastic; there's so much cooperation. Irv is all for the kids; he wants them to learn and if it costs more money, he'll get it and spend it on the kids. That's why we have this special program.

Jim Norlander, Electrical Construction Teacher, CEC,
Denver, Colorado

Last year, I didn't even know about this place, the CEC. I was working a job with the bricklaying instructor and he told me he was teaching over at the Career Ed Center. I had to ask him where the hell it was. Next thing I knew, I had a job here, too. I came right out of the business; I'm not an educator.

I've got handicapped students in this class. Whether it works depends on the handicap. I really can't teach a kid that's blind to be an electrician. He may be okay in electronics, where they do minute delicate things that need a sensitive touch, but I can't send a blind person out to wire buildings, do stage lighting or that kind of thing. There are so many built-in hazards on construction sites, you know, that they couldn't see--rubble, scaffolding--and that kind of work takes a lot of mobility. You don't stand in one spot very long; you're all over.

I have a hearing impaired student in my morning class and I think he would be fine for electronics. There are other areas in electronics that would work for him. The Support Services staff works with him on reading and vocabulary.

I have one kid with a learning disability. Mechanically he's fine and smart, he's okay orally. You may have to give him directions three or four times and be a little more detailed, but once he learns it, he's okay. The special ed support services have helped the kid and in the construction area, we're all working to get him into industry. Starting next Monday, he's going out on a job.

One of the things with construction that people don't realize is that there's no two jobs the same. In a factory there are jobs that are the same thing, but in construction, even if you build custom houses that are supposed to be exactly alike, they never are. So I think that it takes a type of person who can adapt to fit new situations every day. Some kids won't make it under those conditions. We have to be realistic about job placement for handicapped students.

Agnes Foster, Health Occupations Teacher, CEC, Denver

Several occupations come out of our area--medical support, central supply, electrocardiograms, ward clerk, medical office assistant, anatomy, physiology, all kinds of things.

I've got one student now who was never successfully integrated into a regular classroom in his home school, and still isn't. But he doesn't prove handicapped in this class. Joe handles all the subject matter, does excellently in testing, has good coordination. He's just an excellent student, does everything on his own, just comes to me for help when he needs it. His socialization has improved tremendously since he came here. I have been amazed at him ever since he came in. He makes 100 on anatomy tests, just sits there and figures it all out.

There's another one who has really blossomed--George. He was so low in testing, his home school was going to put him in a program for the trainable mentally retarded. His teacher-coordinator told me he wouldn't succeed, but that the failure wouldn't hurt him. Well, he never misses a day. We couldn't open class without him. All the kids accept him and he has a really searching mind. He looks things up, studies, can relate diabetes symptoms. He's learning all kinds of things. They transferred him over to the morning class for a while because he got an after-noon job, but he got so lonely for the class that he transferred back.

We don't show any differences to our students. They all have their charts up and the instruction is individualized. Maybe Joe will do one-third as much as some of the other students, but that doesn't matter. They each go whichever way they want and as far as they can. Some days they don't need any help, so I don't bother them. Other times, Connie will help reinforce what they're learning or test them verbally if they can't do it in writing. Connie and I have a terrific rapport with each other; we can really communicate. So, I get more than enough support.

I've been in medicine about thirty years. Have a masters in vocational ed and a certification in child development. I think that helped me tremendously with some of these learning problems and things like that. I was also principal of an elementary school for twenty years and that makes a difference. You get to understand, try to give them a chance.

I enjoy the handicapped kids. They need us more than the kids who get along. I feel strongly that's where I'm needed, because the others are going to get there anyway.

The other kids learn so much from the slow ones, you know. They love them and stand up for them, care about feelings and don't let them get hurt. If George has a bad day, they back off, or they help him over it. He just wouldn't even talk at first, except to himself while he worked. We had to teach him the appropriate behavior. We couldn't have him talking while the others were trying to work. He's come so far now!

Sandra Graves,* Mentally Retarded Student, CEC, Denver, Colorado

I used to go to another school, but I like it better here; there aren't so many creeps. There was lots of noise there and you couldn't concentrate with the boys. It's mostly boys.

I want to be a secretary. The teacher gives us timings and I'm up to twenty-eight words a minute. I think I'll work close to home. Me and my dad and my mother are home now. My brother's in college. And there's my kitty cat, Chipper.

You don't have to get a pass here to get around in the halls. I'd rather be here than in the other school. My mother brings me in the morning and I ride the bus home. When I was sixteen I was getting up the nerve to do some typing at home and I do that off and on. I had one semester of typing in the other school but the teacher wouldn't let me come back. He said I wasn't fast enough to keep up with the rest of the class. I never was any good at it till now. I was always behind there, and it made me feel like giving up, actually. I could tell I wasn't doing good and I felt bad about it. Here, they don't rush me.

I like roller skating and I have a lot of imagination. You know, I really want to be a nurse. But if I can't do that, I'd like to be a secretary in a doctor's office. Make appointments and all that.

* Fictitious name.

Vocational Programs for Students with Special Needs, Palm Beach County Schools, Florida

“Many, many educators are frightened to death that they’re going to have to change and water down their programs to accommodate handicapped students’ abilities. I talk against that as much as I possibly can because that wouldn’t do anybody a favor.”

Donna Batelaan

When U.S. Public Law 94-142 began to be implemented across the nation, Palm Beach County had no programs or plans to improve vocational education for students with handicaps. Donna Batelaan was hired by the school board to provide liaison services among the three agencies of vocational education, special education, and vocational rehabilitation on both administrative and school-based levels, to act as internal advocate for vocational education and related services in secondary schools, and to develop and implement an appropriate master plan.

She conducted an extensive needs assessment, developed the master plan, and carried out a series of staff development workshops designed to acquaint vocational education teachers, special education teachers, rehabilitation counselors, guidance personnel, and parents, as well as other agency representatives, with ideas on expanding vocational education and related services for handicapped students.

Fourteen high schools, two regional vocational technical schools, and a Florida Atlantic University-based program for the trainable mentally retarded are involved in the vocational programs. Donna works intensively with two of these, more have now been assigned to a recently hired second staff person, and another will get staff attention next year. Schools have begun to assign roles for coordination between vocational education and special education to workshop-trained teachers and are hiring full-time support staff. The number of handicapped students referred to the technical centers has already increased measurably since these efforts began.

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Palm Beach County stretches forty to fifty miles along the southeast Florida coast and as far inland. Its population is as varied as you'll find anywhere, ranging from very wealthy people along the coast to migrant workers in sugar cane and vegetable fields. Of the county's eighty-eight schools, North Technical and South Technical are the only regional vocational high schools, but some thirty other vocational programs are scattered throughout the regular schools.

The county school board was fortunate in finding Donna Batelaan to fill the role of liaison counselor in special education when Public Law 94-142 had to be implemented, for Ms. Batelaan, herself a quadriplegic, is an old hand at fighting her way through the obstacles handicapped people encounter. The task she faces and the determined

attitude she brings to it reminded me of Doug Gill and his situation in Georgia. In two years she has come far already in her singlehanded efforts toward career education for handicapped students in the scattered schools of Palm Beach County.

Donna Batalaan gets around to the schools in her own van after a lift has raised her motorized wheelchair inside where she can transfer to a specially-constructed driver's seat. She and her husband, who is also confined to a wheelchair, lead an extremely active life in addition to their official workload. Among other things, she is president of the Florida Council of Handicapped Organizations and a member of the Florida Women's Political Caucus in Palm Beach.

Donna Batelaan, Liaison Counselor in Special Education, Palm Beach County, Florida

The school board hired me a little over two years ago to write a master plan for educating handicapped students. It took six months to put that document together, because I surveyed a lot of handicapped people face to face, rather than by mail. I also thought it important to visit every school principal who would be involved in programming down the road. When that was done, I had the opportunity to do quite a number of development activities and to meet with a lot of vocational teachers. Since I used to be a rehab counselor, I knew technical people pretty well, and that helped. I spent much of last year just selling the idea that a lot of handicapped students can function well in vocational programs. What I did was mostly public relations, because many people were really taken aback by what I was saying.

The technical schools had no formal programs at all for handicapped kids. Most of them were just in special education in the regular high schools, although some kids were getting into vocational education without a conscious policy. Services for handicapped students tend to be better here for younger kids, then get fewer and fewer at the secondary level. The schools are overcrowded; building programs and funds just don't keep up with the expanding population.

Another problem is that every school has its own decision-making policies, and it's hard to operate country-wide when you have to know how to work uniquely in each school. Some of the differences come out in who does what. You go into one school and find the guidance department is responsible for certain things, then in the next school it's some other department. One school may have a policy where students can't go to technical school until they've tried the program they're looking at for a year in high school. That makes for stable referrals to Tech but lowers the referral rate, and the handicapped students in such a school have less chance of getting into a technical center. I also found that special ed

teachers knew very little about what went on in occupational areas, so I had to do a lot of staff development just to bring them together at one table in a single school. Over and over they would express amazement. The special ed teachers would say, "Oh, I didn't know *that's* what you did. I have kids who could certainly do *that!*" or, "We could probably work it out."

We spent last year on staff development in a pilot area around South Tech. This year I'm supposed to have special needs teams to work in two other geographical areas, but our grant money hasn't come through yet, so there's really still only one of me. Besides South Tech has two regular high schools, I work intensely with a unique pre-vocational program for trainable retarded kids on the Florida Atlantic University campus.

In the middle of last year we employed an EMR specialist and a few others. That helped make important changes. The other day we discovered a state-level position for a work-study coordinator in special ed. Part of my job is searching out information like that and putting it all together.

When I first went into education, I steered clear of special ed, because I had gone to school under a totally segregated program. I'd gone to kindergarten with all the other kids; then I got polio, which left me a quadriplegic. After I was finished with the initial part of physical therapy, it was time to go back to school. I do quite a bit for myself now, but I didn't do much for myself then and my whole elementary and junior high school years were spent with all handicapped students.

As a kid, I had no handicapped role models. I was scared to death I'd end up at Goodwill. The only way I knew I could work in public was that my dad had a retail store and I worked there from the age of fourteen. But in school, they were always making you unsure you could do things, even though academically I was fine.

In high school I went to what we call regular school, but I was in the special education class--there was no choice about that. Even my first two years in college, I didn't make much progress. I knew going away to college was the only way to make myself independent. I hated having to be in a wheelchair, being different, but my first motorized chair gave me the first chance in my life to do things alone. I'll never forget going to a shopping center by myself, not having to depend on anyone.

I could dress and eat and all that by then, but I still couldn't get in and out of bed by myself. I was taught to do that before. I transferred to the University of Illinois, which probably had the best program for disabled people in the country at that time. I went to the U. of I. in my junior year but I still couldn't use a toilet alone. I'd had the wrong kind of chair for that kind of transfer.

We were totally integrated into the mainstream of campus life at Illinois. The campus was completely accessible to me in a chair, and the people there put together the equipment I needed to drive a car in a very short time. It was a huge turning point for me. In that setting, you were part of the mainstream and you made it; there were no excuses. You had to design your own situation and think about the way you were going to do things--you made it like everybody else. You see, the environment was structured in a totally accessible way, so if you didn't make it, then it would be for the same reasons that nonhandicapped people didn't make it. I saw people more disabled than I am doing more--doing everything.

I did have to accept being in a chair forever, though, and I finally went into special ed because there were few enough social studies teaching jobs around--and fewer yet for people in wheelchairs. I had to go back to work for my father when I graduated from college, because I couldn't get a job teaching, but while I worked for him I did my masters in special ed.

I still couldn't find employment as a teacher and I had to get very sophisticated about legislation, challenge the system on this lack of equal opportunity in my case. Finally I got a job as a rehabilitation specialist, but what I really wanted was to be a career counselor. I was told I wasn't mobile enough to make home visits and all those things. Finally I managed to get the right equipment--a motorized wheelchair and a van with a lift--so I went back to reapply. They were still having heart attacks about hiring me.

My husband, who is also in a chair, had to use his connections as chairman of the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped before I got that job. Then, after a little over a year, this job became available, and it was like the job description was written for my background with special ed, rehab, and counseling experience.

Anyway, my concern for the handicapped students is with employability. Academic areas are pretty well covered for them, but the things they need to find and keep jobs are what we're concentrating on in developing our program. We especially need things over and above the education that goes on in the high school classrooms. We're going to take some of the kids to the technical center, give them on-site exposure to those programs. Some of the teachers are beginning to hold units on employability skills--taking some time out from pure academics and redoing some materials. Math, for example, can be taught in many ways; reading can be taught in many ways. Why not use the content that's going to be vital to those kids after they exit from the school system, whether by graduation or just by leaving?

All of our high schools have what's called an occupational specialist (OS), whose responsibility it is to do all these kinds of things. We're presently hiring an aide who will work with the OSs in actually getting kids out on field trips that are vocationally related.

One of the biggest changes is hearing special ed teachers beginning to say that it can be done, that they can work with the vocational teachers. Oftentimes I will carry information from one department to the other and help the teacher prepare a profile of a particular student. Because of their training, high school teachers have trouble transferring the kinds of information needed for rehab and job placement activities; they can tell you IQ scores, they can tell you reading levels, they can tell you this, but they can't tell you what you need to know to help an individual student make a decision about the kind of training program he or she should go into. Those are two different sets of information. And so, I'm helping them make that transfer. Okay, a student's IQ is this; how does he or she behave in this particular situation? Let's look at a particular job. These are the kinds of things that an individual will have to be able to do. Does she have some skills in those areas or not? So, I'm trying to get them to think more in terms of information relevant to the work world outside the classroom. That's where I think my background in rehab is helpful. You have to look at what the employer is going to tolerate; you look at behaviors you need to know about, such as their level of mobility. Can they get around? Can they take the bus? Can they drive? Do they have the potential to drive? In our county if you don't drive, you're almost unemployable, just forget it. So, I'm helping them look at these things. It's a very different set of information, that's sometimes difficult for them to see because they think in terms of upgrading a person's reading level. Well, if you've gotten it to a certain point and it's functional, you need to keep working on that, but they need other things to function! Let's be realistic; jobs are hard to come by and if you're a handicapped person with few skills--if you're not the top--you're going to flip to the bottom and that's going to be it. We need to recognize that.

One of the things I ran into was voc ed teachers saying, "These kids can't make it, they can't be in my class." I said, "Okay, let's look at what it is they can't do." Can't read the text book? We can tape. We can send the text book to their special ed class for extra work. What else can't they do? "They just can't make it" was the attitude, but once the teacher started to break down program objectives--one of our workshop activities--I could say, "Okay, let's look at your particular program. You list for me five of your objectives, and what you would have to change about those objectives for a particular handicapped student." A lot of them found out that you don't need to water down programs. Many, many general educators are frightened to death that they're

going to have to change and water down their programs to accommodate handicapped students' abilities. I talk against that as much as I possibly can because that wouldn't do anybody a favor. *Once you get out of school, you must function, you must function in the world. And if you can't function in the world, we will be paying for you on social security and welfare forever. We're not doing anybody a favor by giving them a success when they know it's not a real success.*

General educators also talk about being overworked, not being asked to do more, and I understand because basically they're unfamiliar with dealing with disabled people and are afraid. That's what I've met with through rehab experience and my educational experience, people are just totally unfamiliar. You have to convince them, say, "Yes, we're people too, and we function the same, we like the same things, we don't like the same things; some of us are nice, some of us are nasty, some of us are lazy." Then they'll meet you on a personal basis. Really, the best attitudinal thing you could do would be to take a bunch of people home. If I could take a group of teachers home every week, they could see I do the same things they do, except I do them differently, some a little slower, some better. *That's what I like to dwell on most, that the kids you're dealing with are more like the regular students than unlike them. And they must learn to function. There will be some successes, some failures. But a lot of failure happens because people just cannot drop the fact of difference. Just look back at some of the things people said about integrating black kids in the schools. It's the same story: "We can't integrate high school kids; they're too used to the way it's been." If you could take all the kids and put them together without the adults who've been conditioned to expect failure, they'd work it out.*

When I taught school, I had little kids. The first day I went in and explained all the things I could do and all the things I couldn't do, and all the reasons why I was in a chair, and what polio was and everything. They asked me all of the questions I knew that they were going to ask me. Once that was over with, it was over with. Then they met me on the same basis they met everybody else. But I had to get them over that total unfamiliarity.

You know, when you're working with handicapped youngsters, and I don't care if they're mentally retarded or if they're physically disabled or hearing impaired, they need to understand some things about attitudes. They need that information to deal with a very painful situation. I advocate--I very strongly advocate--mainstreaming as opposed to not mainstreaming. The handicapped youngster does need some assistance, because when you finally get out in the mainstream, there will be those attitudes you meet that people do not want you around. Not all people, but you know who's thinking about you in different ways.

Why does that happen?--It's because historically we haven't been anyplace. It's not because of the individual. I had to learn that by myself. But that's what gives you the right to be independent finally, that feeling of, "Yeah, I belong here too."

Lots of people go into education because they love little kids. There's nothing more precious than a little crippled kid, but then that kid grows up and needs some semblance of respect and independence, so you have to treat them like you treat other people so that they can learn to respect themselves.

I remember my own struggle with being very dependent and learning that my dependency was a function of my personality rather than my disability, because it was in many respects. I didn't know a lot about how to get around, but I also perpetuated my helplessness without understanding I was perpetuating it. Once I learned that I couldn't use that any more, I just had to get out there and do it, and that's it. Your environment can be structured in a way that lets you get around, so you might as well not lean on the fact that you're disabled, particularly in social situations. I was not as sociable as I wanted to be, but it wasn't really because I was in a chair. I just used the chair as an excuse for years until I met a lot of other women in chairs who were doing a whole lot more than I was doing. It was a long time before I finally looked at myself.

Now I want to help kids look at their situations and separate their disabilities from their personalities. They can't be their disabilities. Schools generally identify them as their disabilities. Everywhere you turn you're labeled; they remind you you're labeled. A big question for us here now is, shall we create special programs or shall we plug away trying to improve the programs we have for everybody? We've taken the philosophical stand, I suppose, that we should plug away with the programs we have and get the kids in there with the support services they need. It's a more difficult way to go because if you create a class of disabled kids at the technical center, you can monitor it more easily. You can control the information and you might get a little better product, but then what are you doing? You're doing the same thing you're fighting against. The real world doesn't have special jobs in special communities. One of the worst things about special programs is that they reduce your competition. And I guess we might as well face it, that's what America is all about. When you're out there, you're out competing with the next person whether it's for a job or for social position or whatever it is; you're out there competing. It may be unfortunate, but that's what it's all about.

We have to teach kids how to handle competition. One of the things I have started to do is get a mini-interview on each kid, sit with the kid for ten or fifteen minutes to get a handle on where they are, if they've ever had jobs, gotten their own jobs, what kinds of jobs, if they've ever been in the technical center--to retrieve that information without having the teacher fill out forms. It's cumbersome, but it's the only way we can get to the information this year. This is directly related to vocational counseling. What we're going on right now is almost no information that's related to their abilities in a work simulated situation or a training situation. A kid just says, "I like that program." Or it's chosen because the reading level of that particular training program is very low. You just don't have to do that much reading going to horticulture. What you find is a whole group of kids going to horticulture because there's not much reading involved there, rather than because they have a skill and an aptitude, an ability and interest. So, I'm really coming around to the fact that if we assess kids in-system rather than farming them out to say, rehab, we can develop ways to get the kinds of information we need. Of course, I think this will be a real selling point, because teachers are asking, "How do you know this kid's going to hang in?" We will have some solid answers. Also, we'll be able to predict that a student will be successful with this modification, that modification, or another. We'll be able to change around this, that, and the other so that a person might get to make it. I think that will be very helpful. The point is to give students skills that they're going to need to be more independent in the employment market. That means we have to get more kids into the technical vocational programs. We're going to have to give kids more on-the-job training. We're going to have to move away from letting kids stay in the academic setting for four or five years and then moving them out--often into the unemployment market.

One of the things our interview will give us is a handle on where that kid is this year; then we will check back next year to see where the kid's gone. We'll have an idea of where we are in terms of individual students. One of the things I learned is that when we talk about program change or improvement, we can't continue to talk to teachers about general things they might be able to do. You can't go in with your little song and dance; what you have to do is go in on the basis of individual kids and help with specific problem areas, talk to specific teachers about specific kids. Then you have to stop saying it can be done and *show* it can be done. That's the stage we're at now. Two years ago everybody was complaining about who they couldn't get into the technical center. Now we're saying, "Okay, we're not going to talk about them any more, we're not going to complain about it. We're going to look hard at why this kid has had trouble in this program with this teacher and can't do it, and we'll get in and do something about it."

We will not, and I don't say this out loud too often, we won't tolerate kids having no access to programs. That's no longer legal. But it will take time because teachers have to feel comfortable that you're not going to dump every kid who's handicapped into their program.

At South Technical they have an excellent guidance corps. They get help with information, they get help in terms of counseling, they do have part of an Individualized Manpower Training Services (IMTS) program. That is an auxiliary program that doesn't really have to do with the skills as such, not with teaching air conditioning mechanics, for instance, but with teaching some math, that kind of thing. Other than that, they have me coming there every once in a while if they've got a specific question.

What they've done at South Tech is split up the program. In other words, they have two guidance people and an occupational specialist who divide the fifteen or sixteen occupational areas up so one counselor is counselor for this number and the next counselor is for that number. So, anyone who seems to be interested in a certain area will go to a particular counselor. When we get into North Tech I might suggest something different only because their guidance department has a little different character. They might be better off having a special needs group. What I'm trying to say is we have to stay flexible and adapt to different needs and ways of doing things in each school. I will personally keep working at South Tech; we're supposed to get our second position filled shortly with a person who will be at North and also capable of going from one school to another, monitoring, helping, holding the teacher's hand, bringing resource information, support services, locating what they don't have and keeping a handle on everything. They'll have to float from school to school.

Last year I did a number of workshops on a variety of topics. We dealt with different handicapping conditions; we dealt with attitudes about handicapped people in general; we talked about legislation. I did one for a rehab group on affirmative action and the legislation that goes along with that. We did several on changing your programs and improving them. We did a couple on just working together, communication kinds of things, and how teachers can band together and solve their problems as a faculty team. We also discussed how I would function, or how my position would function within the structure of the schools--what they could do, for instance, if they had a kid they just couldn't deal with.

What I'm going to try and do now is to sit in on the vocational programs to observe over short periods of time and really look at their written material, too, to get a handle on what it's like. High school teachers tend to have little time for planning and usually will not stay

after school because of union contracts. So, what happens is, those few minutes you need to help them share and communicate about kids are not available. I am going to try to work through their structured staffing team, though.

You see, I come in basically as an outsider. Whatever I have to offer better be good because I'm not on that school's staff and I can't really make them do something. What I offer has to be better, has to give them something that's better than what they've got now and not cause them too much extra trouble. My role would be as liaison between departments. If I can do set-up work and help them keep it up and make it function without me there, that's ideal. *If we can figure out what we really want and then adjust that to what we've got--because there's never extra money for extra positions--if we try to work with what's already there, make it better, give it that whole support that's necessary, I believe it can work.*

I just spent the summer writing a career calendar as a set of guidelines. I take the areas of employment in Palm Beach County, the cluster areas in which jobs are available, and detail material that you can use about each area: a field trip that might be a good idea, a person you might invite in, something structured to pull from. It discusses what you could do in the middle school around this and then what you could do at a high school level. It shows them how the vocational education in their building ties in with these areas that really exist out there. You'd be surprised how many teachers, if they had to go out and find their own jobs without having a school setting to turn to, would know very little about the employment community.

I knew the community really well when I came to this job. There's so much that can be done, and so many good people in our system that I just keep plugging away on that basis. And we are now going to be able to hire a second person. So, what I can't talk about in terms of history, I can project in the future because I know exactly that everything's in place; it just needs enough personnel. Either I came to the job at the right time, or Public Law 94-142 came at the right time, or Section 504, or whatever, but everything is in place that should be in place.

I think we can make some significant changes in Palm Beach County. Like the technical programs--North Tech had no ramp to the front door. Well, I came there on a regular basis, and I'm not saying they put that ramp in because of me, but now there's a ramp there; there are some reserved parking spaces. Our administrative complex was made accessible to accommodate me. Those kinds of changes, either because of me or because of the timing or whatever, are taking place. And I do think we have a lot more awareness than we did two years ago. I also

know things are happening because a lot of teachers in our pilot schools are saying things that they didn't say two years ago. I'll go to the technical center and a teacher will come up to me and say, "You know, remember that workshop? I've got a student that's in a similar situation to some of the students we talked about, and he's doing really great."

One of my favorite examples is a kid who is multiply handicapped and black; he's labeled deaf-blind, he has cerebral palsy, he didn't go to school until he was nine years old, he goes to a program for the trainable retarded. When he was assessed, the evaluator didn't sign even though they knew he was deaf and visually impaired. I asked for the report and was told they were having a lot of trouble writing it. I asked, "Why? What's the deal?" and was told, "Well, you must realize there's just no potential." And I said, "Well, if I was in a position of being a counselor, I don't know if I'd sign anything that said he didn't have any potential based on the assessment tools we have available in our community." The evaluator was ready to kill me. I felt like saying, "Why don't you just throw him in the river if he has no potential?" Well, we've done a lot of maneuvering through a lot of agencies and people. We've got a lady to work with him now who signs. He had had some exposure to sign earlier, but they didn't feel he had much potential to sign. *We don't really know his potential; we have no idea. He's learning so much now, beginning to sign back one word, two words; he's beginning to respond to people signing to him, which he didn't do before.* He was really a good manipulator; whatever he didn't want to do, he didn't do, because he didn't pay any attention to anybody. *I knew that if we let him get through the system one more year without something, he was going to be lost. Now he's just improving so dramatically, we have no idea what he can do.* He's still in the TMR Center, but we don't really know if he's mentally impaired or not--probably won't know for a long time. We just sent him to be assessed again, but we already know that he's functioning quite well now. We're working on some speech and he's formed a couple of sounds and a couple of words.

You know, there are a lot of kids out there like that. People just aren't used to working with anyone that seriously involved. I read everything I can on those areas--I guess because people said I couldn't do so many things that I can do. I believe we'll find some way that will improve anyone's situation.

We've got a business ed teacher at one of our centers who's very inexperienced with handicapped kids. They've got some very severely involved youngsters there, and she gave me all the reasons why things wouldn't work with those kids. Well, I've learned just to go in and help changes occur in subtle ways. I bring her a lot of materials, and I sort of sit and talk with her often

about little things that might be done. Maybe this kid can't get all the way there, but maybe this year *here* is okay, maybe next year *there*; we don't know. And isn't it okay if he gets to "here" and will never get to "there," because we have to redefine sometimes what independence is. For me it might be way up there; for this person it might not be, but that's still okay, she's still doing a good job. That's the route that I'm taking now. Change and new things are coming into play all the time. We're going to make some mistakes and we're going to have some successes, but the mistakes need to be learned from; you can't avoid having mistakes. When you deal with three children, you deal with three personalities and three differences and three learning styles. And if you deal with a fourth person and that person is disabled, it's just one more person with some differences. If we teach children who are handicapped with the same attitude as we teach able-bodied children, we'll be on the right track.

Career Training Center (CTC), Keen High School District, Bakersfield, California

“If people treat me like I’m handicapped, then I’ll feel handicapped. But if people treat me like you’d treat the guy down the street, I’ll feel like the guy own the street—like I’m somebody.”

Robert Webb

The Career Training Center (CTC) in Bakersfield, California, was developed for handicapped students whose schools were remote (up to fifty-five miles) from the area business complex and unable to provide adequate vocational education and services. It is one component in the Kern High School District's constellation of services for students with special needs. Nine home schools send a total of some 160 high school juniors and seniors to the CTC facility for half of each school day, on referrals made through IEP committee procedures.

Morning session CTC students are educable and trainable mentally retarded. They are taught a variety of specific vocational skills in courses derived directly from actual jobs in the community and classrooms modeled after employment settings. After basic training in a skill area, students are placed in a real work setting for thirty hours leading to employer certification (or, if necessary, additional training at the CTC). By graduation, most students are certified in several vocations. Independent living skills are also taught, partly in a house trailer equipped as a complete home.

Afternoon students have a wide variety of sensory, physical, emotional, and educational handicaps. Because they tend to function more skillfully than morning students, their program is one of paravocational development--work ethics, personality, appearance, attitudes, values, fitness--leading as quickly as possible (usually after one semester) to on-site training in local industry and other work sites in the Bakersfield area. Some receive their vocational education at the Regional Occupational Center; some are directed on to college.

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The people who tell about their programs in this and the next chapter have very direct, practical concerns with helping handicapped students to become gainfully employed as independent adults. In the Kern High School District, Bakersfield, California, vocational education is not well developed in terms of the local job market, as Jack Schuetz, Director of Special Education observes. Special education staff there believed there should be a separate facility through which handicapped students could be channeled into the real work world as efficiently as possible, and that facility is the Career Training Center.

Some readers of this book may believe that even part-time segregation of students with handicaps is inappropriate. Yet the CTC offers some unique approaches to the paravocational preparation that employers value at least as much as work skills, and it demonstrates a very strong liaison between school and employment community. Readers will also find that the optimistic defense of a broad and flexible education for every youngster, as espoused by Doug Gill and Irv Moscovitz in earlier chapters, is tempered by the Bakersfield approach that assumes most handicapped students will stay close to their original homes and need, more than anything, job skills specific to the local job market.

CTC Staff Chairman John Penner describes the job training curriculum; Fred Goodwald, afternoon program coordinator and paravocational program liaison with community employers will discuss that aspect of the total program. Fred was in the hotel business for twenty-one years before going back to school to become a special educator, a dramatic career change that stemmed from his positive experiences in hiring people with handicaps. He still sees himself as a businessman producing the kind of high school graduates with handicaps that will "sell" on the job market.

Robert Webb is a senior at South High School and the CTC who received on-site training as an accountant at Tenneco West and is now paid for his part time work there. My scheduled interviews with Robert Webb and his employers at the Tenneco Corporation were almost sabotaged by gale force winds that made it unsafe for Robert to leave home on the crutches that give him mobility despite paralysis from the waist down. Fred Goodwald solved the problem by picking him up at home, giving me the chance to watch teacher and student in casual "man-to-man" exchanges that spoke of fond mutual respect. Some of Robert Webb's comments were made during that conversation, some later at his work site.

Jack Schuetz, Director of Special Education, Kern School District, Bakersfield, California

We're trying to establish a constellation of services to provide programs for individual kids. With Public Law 94-142, that's what we have to do, but we saw this coming some time ago. We knew the kids needed more, even years ago, but our only option was special classes. Kids would stay there all day, or, if they were educationally handicapped, maybe they'd just go to two or three instruction periods a day. That's where our options stopped. It was because we just couldn't do that any more that the Career Training Center came into being.

There was a tremendous void in our vocational education offerings for handicapped students, so we began with a kind of community outreach program. *The key is to get students out of the classroom and into what we call a life experience curriculum. Now that's a broad term describing anything you and I would encounter in real life. We have to teach youngsters to compete, and that can't all be done in the classroom. You can talk about it, use all the media stuff, all the materials available and it still doesn't do the job. The best classroom in the world is out there in the community.*

The CTC is really just an extension of programs offered in the home high schools. We've never attempted to set up a separate program, but this mainstreaming issue is highly overplayed. Our regular vocational education programs were not adequate and we need comprehensive services.

It used to be possible just to get rid of kids who were difficult, but we can't do that any more. We must bring in treatment services, special education, counseling and all the rest--all the services we haven't had in the past--and this requires something at the school as a catalyst, outside the teacher/counselor role. So, we put teams together, use as many of these services as we can get, and try to resolve differences about which populations we're serving and what they need.

About 20 percent of the special needs kids we serve could not survive in school. We have to find options for them through a constellation of services. Maybe they can function on a job with just some remedial reading or math help. Our student Service Center concept includes bringing in other agencies, providing in-service training to regular teachers, doing family education, making comprehensive counseling services available. We need a unit within schools to bring all these pieces together and make sure they're done correctly. *We've got to structure individual programs so a kid can have a piece of this and a piece of that. He may or may not survive on a school campus; it may not work to have him in school for more than one period a week. That's why we've developed a very flexible transportation system which is the key to our constellation of services. Without that flexible transportation that can get a kid where she needs to be when she needs to be there we'd be dead. When people try to blend a transportation system for the handicapped into their regular transportation system, it just doesn't work; it will fail every time. The system has to be responsive, and quick.*

So the CTC is an extension of the high school campuses with its own responsive transport system. Kids come to the Center part of the day; in the future some may be spending more time at the Center than at their home schools. You see, survival is the key, and we've found out that some of these kids are barely hanging by their fingernails. There are things they need far more than

reading and writing. We're digging kids out of the woodwork now who were shoved aside, discarded. One of our components, the Phoenix Learning Center in a mental health establishment, has found kids who had dropped out of school completely. There's a whole underground of kids out there, taking care of their own somehow, a subculture that manages to survive. We're going after that, making a run at it.

We've pilot tested all the pieces of our constellation by now, but we still have to put a lot of it together. We're still waiting for funding in some cases. In vocational education for the handicapped, we do put some of the students into our regional vocational education school, but the ones that need it have to go through our basics program at the CTC first. ROC, the Regional Occupational Center, is a training area for the CTC, just as industries and the city are. We expect the same things from it, even though it's a school. But it doesn't offer everything industry does. For instance, it doesn't teach accounting, such as Robert Webb gets at Tenneco. Sometimes we have to go beyond the classroom to get kids mainstreamed into life experience.

The CTC really affects individual kids and it does so very admirably. It deals with the individuals' uniqueness. Whatever a kid wants to do, if it's available in this community, we'll help him or her get in there. Not to give them what used to pass as work experience--that was a real failure of makeshift jobs, lack of support, poor adjustment--but to help them rub elbows in real job situations with real workers and to stick with them supportively. Then we go on to career training, teaching routines and tasks systematically--tasks derived directly from the real job. When they've learned the skills, they perform them on site and get certified.

These kids have a lot of different backgrounds. Some need to be plugged into socializing activities, some into work, some into basic living skills. Some can hardly function at all, but if we can't get them to function at the CTC, they won't function anywhere.

We designed the CTC without any outside consultants. Our own staff identified the problems and hammered out solutions. There were seven of us: myself, John, Fred, and four others. We sat down right in my living room and started to list the problems: transportation, staff training, facilities, instructional process . . . just listed problem after problem. Then we gestalted the whole thing and developed committees to deal with clusters of problems. After two years, it finally all jelled and we had a program that was really enhanced by the fact that the staff had designed it themselves.

Our range of services is such that we can now handle all kids except the really untrainable or the profoundly multiply handicapped who require sheltered surroundings. But it takes a lot of options and a lot of flexibility. If you have a system where it takes an act of Congress to move a kid from service A to E to F, it won't work. You have to be able to move. Staffs have to be philosophically prepared for new service orientations and structures. And you just can't be strangled by regulations if things are to get done.

If we had the right kind of big voc ed center here, we might be able to house a CTC kind of program within it. But our legislation for a new center didn't pass and what we've got now are mostly clusters of vocational classes in the high schools and the ROC Center. Much of what they teach would be a waste of time to our handicapped kids. They need training relevant to real jobs in their own communities. If they learned offset printing in a voc ed program they'd be dead pigeons; there are no offset printing jobs in this town. Kids who can relocate to other urban areas are different, but our kids can't afford that luxury. Many of them will live at home the rest of their lives: they need jobs in their own communities.

We've had to learn a lot of things to make programs work for kids. You know, I can remember walking into my first special ed classroom--Room 272 at East High, it was. The previous teacher had been there five years before I came. Well, there was nothing in that classroom: no books, no materials, nothing. Except a wire strung across the top of the room with a juice can hanging from it. A juice can. And that, so help me, was all I had. Just a room full of desks with chairs. I asked the teacher before me, Marvin, what that can was for. "Just a topic of conversation," he said. There wasn't even a thing on the walls. He must have shown movies or something.

I didn't know what in the world I was going to do. I had no budget; just fifteen kids. Now I can laugh at people who complain though they've got materials and aides running out of their ears and an instructional ratio of 1 to 6. I had to scramble, I tell you. Went out and collected phone books, catalogs, started writing dittoes, making materials. One time I actually got a saw and sawed off some of those chairs locked to the desks by rails; I needed some room.

Well, I learned to be resourceful. And I learned tactics of autonomy, the tactic of the financial coup, and a few others. I can't tell all my secrets, but there are things you learn over time that become absolutely indispensable to getting things done. We never had enough money, for instance, but we've always got *some* in reserve that can be pumped in wherever it's needed on very short notice. We've got a lot of good survival tactics.

John Fenner, Director of the Career Training Center,
Bakersfield, California

We feel it is really necessary to give our students very specific skill instruction so they can go out to jobs able to meet the standards of performance there. Our community survey showed that there were employers willing to take on our students with handicaps if we would work on these skills with them. Since employers don't have skill requirements all written out, the first thing we had to do was actually observe jobs or industrial processes to identify those skills. We observed workers from the time they clocked in in the morning to the time they checked out at night. Then we worked out step-by-step processes for the different skills involved. Then we checked with the employer to make sure we had the procedures right. The kinds of jobs we chose for training depended on the kinds of jobs that would be available to our students in the community.

Our first concern is to get students into any kind of job, then to upgrade skills over time. We break things down as simply and as repetitively as necessary and let each student go at an individual pace. Those who can't work as fast as others can stay with a task as long as needed to accomplish it according to the required standards. Continued practice usually gets them to the point where they can satisfy the instructors and the community employers. After the required thirty hours on the job, employers certify them or send them back for more training. Most of our students do achieve certification on their first try. Then, after certification, they're eligible for paid employment. By the time they graduate from the CTC, most students are certified in a number of job areas.

Our success with placement has been much greater since we've found students on-the-job observation slots close to their homes. Transportation problems often affect attendance and the ability to hold jobs, so placing kids near their residences really pays off with employers. If we approach an employer, telling him the young man or lady lives nearby, he has fewer worries about turnover and transportation problems, and he's more willing to make the investment.

Typically, our morning students begin their day at the home high school, are transported here for a three-hour period, then return to their high school to complete the day. Some are in special classes at the home school, some in regular classes.

Our own classrooms are set up as much as possible the way they'll find work settings out in the community. We have a kitchen with a little cafeteria where they actually serve food, a hospital setup, an auto maintenance shop, a nursery for preschoolers, and so on. We also rent a mobile home where we teach independent living skills.

This is a big improvement over what we had when I was a special ed teacher in one of the regular high schools. We had what we called a "work experience" program, which meant placing a student for an hour a day with the school custodian or in the food services area or the library, hoping he or she would pick up some skills. It didn't lead to very good employment rates, although we thought it was a good program at the time.

Now we train for very specific and relevant skills systematically, either here in the classrooms or out on actual jobs when that becomes appropriate. We evaluate each student carefully through work samples in training areas and take their individual interests into account, helping them get into the kind of work they want. We encourage them to make as much progress as they can; we also try to help them be realistic.

Fred Goodwald, Afternoon Program Coordinator, CTC,
Bakersfield, California

Our approach is completely different from what you'd normally think of in a school situation--different in attitude and in our relationship with the kids. Hell, we're almost a family, you get that close to people here, but we're also a high school and we get kids out there on jobs--paid jobs. What good would it do to tell these students they can't go out and work because they have to sit in the classroom while we teach them the metric system? Get them out there with some independence and some money in their pockets, make them responsible people, and you'll never dream many of them are retarded.

We don't just put them out there on jobs, but keep very very close contact with them and with the employers. *We train them to develop their careers and, even more importantly--and this is the key to the whole thing--to develop their self-image. If you can change their self-image, then you automatically change the public's image of them and you're home free.*

Some people think we're wrong putting all the handicapped kids together in one place, but we do it to get them out in the real world more efficiently--and I'm very staunch in defending it. You see, if you have a youngster who just isn't ready or able to do what other kids in a class are doing, you don't do him or her any favors putting him or her in that class. And if you put an aide in there with the student, that only calls attention to his or her difference from the other kids. You could end up causing the kid more problems than he or she had in the first place. That kid knows what's happening. Here, we treat everyone exactly the same and nobody gives us any trouble. There's no catering to anyone--that would just cause problems. If you met any of the kids at the CTC, you'd never know they were handicapped. Particularly when we get them out in the world functioning like everyone else. We

just don't play up handicaps. Hell, we all have them in some form or other.

I remember the first time Robert Webb came into our class. We were holding class in an old trailer that had three steps going up into it and Robert couldn't go up steps without assistance. When he came, we had a choice--myself and the other kids--of helping him come up those steps or letting him manage alone. I asked the students what we should do and they decided if he wanted to be in this class he finds his own way up the steps. Then I asked Robert if he wanted help and he said, "Hell, no!" He just sat down on the bottom step and worked his way up. That's the way we operate.

Much of my work is really a two-way selling job. I sell employers on students and students on employers. This is the easy part, because just like every other city we have more training areas than we've got kids ready for placement, to be honest with you. They're so easy to get, people just don't think of them. One example is the City of Bakersfield itself: the biggest employer in the area. I talked to the mayor and it was no trouble selling him. He talked to the personnel director, other staff--they're all civic minded. Look at the different jobs there are in a city! The mayor told me just to contact him and he'd find whatever I needed. In addition to the city of Bakersfield, other Kern County facilities, school districts, and state and federal agencies, we have a list of approximately fifty private businesses that have trained our students or agreed to train them. I have no doubt we could find hundreds of businesses that would cooperate if we needed them.

Part of getting a kid out there is so they can learn what's expected of them, how to act. They do exactly what the other employees do, even while they're in unpaid training. They take coffee breaks with them, are treated like them, overcome their shyness and learn to function out there.

Some kids have a long way to go before they're ready for the work world. There was one girl who had been placed in one of the special classes for kids who just can't be handled, the kind of class where the parents have to pick them up after a half day of school. In her junior year, she was moved to another special class for the educationally handicapped. In her senior year, we got her enrolled at the CTC. She was intelligent and attractive, but I think she'd have cut you with a knife without batting an eye, and she certainly wasn't ready to settle into learning job skills.

We realized right away that one of her first problems was she didn't have clothes. She had some old torn dungarees and not much more. I took her down to the Assistance League and explained the problem to the ladies there. In the three and a half hours they spent with her

they "dolled" her up. That started it. Then a teacher gave her some more clothes, and I brought some from my daughter. Next thing you know, she had a wardrobe bigger than most of us. Then we put her in charm school: the makeup went on, the hair was styled, the whole bit! Suddenly she decided she was a good-looking young lady after all and her whole attitude changed. We got her a CETA job and then two scholarships to help her through college. During the time she was with us, she got very close to a young gentleman who is totally blind. Now she's learning sign language and has changed her major to work with the deaf and blind. She's doing fantastically well.

The key to the whole thing is finding out what problem each youngster really has. You can't use a shotgun approach--shooting the same thing at all of them--you've got to individualize. You have to make the program fit each kid. You have to do specific things with each one, be personal about it. And if they aren't happy with a placement, we help them change it until we find the right thing. It doesn't stop with high school, either; we follow them up as long as necessary.

We had two other young women who both wanted to be psychiatric technicians, and I said I'd help them any way I could. I placed them in a school for handicapped children for training, got them books, did everything I could think of. After about six months they came to me and said they just couldn't cut it. It was a glamorous idea to them but it just wasn't going to work; it was beyond their abilities. Now they both want to be teachers' assistants and help drive kids to and from school, things like that. I've got them part-time work in a catering business to help earn money while they train. The glamour jobs didn't work out, but they're both really content now with a more realistic goal. You just have to stay flexible.

On the other hand, there's another young man I'm following up on who needed an upward push. He came to the CTC for the last semester of his senior year. His home high school really hadn't done anything for him. He was a hothead, always in trouble and had been kicked out of school. He was labeled EMR and the other kids ridiculed him. Well, he wanted to be a mechanic and we got him into the automotive program at a junior college. Then I found out he hadn't made it, had failed and been picked up by CETA in a job sweeping floors. I went down there and asked CETA to transfer his slot, got him an eight-hour-a-day job working right with a mechanic in a big garage. Now he gets to work on school buses, trucks, tractors. Maybe the college program didn't work, but he sure as hell can do better than sweep floors. This way he may get to be a mechanic after all.

In the morning program here at the CTC we have mostly the mentally retarded kids. In the afternoon program, which I coordinate now, we have mostly students with emotional disturbances, learning disabilities, sensory handicaps, physical disabilities, educational handicaps. A few are also retarded, but it's often hard to tell. But let me tell you, we couldn't do our jobs without the kind of support we have from the administration. Jack Schuetz and John Penner just tell us, "Take care of the kids." They don't put restrictions on us or even count our hours. They know I need to be turned loose to work with these kids and the employers; we're all agreed on what needs to be done and they back me all the way. The administration, the school, the students, the parents, the employers--they all give us real support. And our true satisfaction comes from going out and finding employers to work with our kids for we know our kids will live up to what we promise.

I was talking to an employer the other day and he was telling me how well one of our students was doing. I wanted to make a point, so I said: "You see, that's a perfect example of how even someone classified as mentally retarded will work out in the right situation." He looked surprised and asked, "What do you mean, mentally retarded?" "That's what he is," I told him. "No way," he says.

The way I came out here, to the CTC, was like this. About two and a half years ago, I was in one of the high schools. All the kids here, morning and afternoon, were going through the same program, but it just wasn't challenging enough for the afternoon students. Jack called me at the high school where I worked and said he wanted to change it, would I take on the job? He told me to use my imagination, upgrade it, create a viable program. I was happy where I was, but I double-checked with him and he really said I could do anything I wanted. My feeling was that the CTC's afternoon students basically needed to work on self-image, personality development, work ethics--things like that--and then get out there in real work settings to learn specific skills.

I got this charm school thing working, got kits from *Seventeen* magazine and arranged for the downtown stores to take our girls into courses given there and all that, and I wanted Jack to see the results. I'd worked with the kids on manners and everything, and I told them I was bringing in my boss and they were to put on a real good show so I'd look good.

I told Jack they'd be scared to death with him walking in the room but he said "fine." Jack is real cool. Well, I introduced him to this group of about twelve students and then said I wanted him to meet each one individually. We started with the young lady we found all the clothes for, the one who had been such a troublemaker in her high school, and she turned her big brown eyes loose on him,

shook his hand and touched it with her other hand, and said: "Doctor, you don't know what a pleasure it is meeting you." Jack was stunned. The blood drained right out of his face; he'd never seen anything like it. Well, all the others came on strong, too, all the way round the table. He was so impressed he didn't know what to say!

Well, I'll tell you, those kids had so much fun putting on that show--and Jack decided that from that day on, charm school was to be a formal part of our program. Now, just the other day, I sold him on the idea of teaching disco dancing. Man, what a confidence builder for a handicapped kid.

You can't get that kind of change just by vocational training; you've got to do the whole bit--social skills, self-image, all of it. Then you have to sell the kids to the community, to the employers and sell the students on their training program. I'm a businessman, you see, and these kids are my product. If I don't turn out a good product, I can't sell it. But, you know, in all honesty, I've never been turned down in placing a kid.

For example, I tell Robert Webb, the boy I placed in the accounting department at Tenneco West, as I tell all my students, how you act at Tenneco will make a difference. The next time I come back here to one of those gentlemen and say, I have another person for placement, their response will depend on how you did. See, your response isn't just to yourself, your own needs, it's to the other students who'll be coming along. If you do well and everyone else in the program does well, hey! there's no stopping us.

Bill Conklin, Personnel Director at Tenneco West,
Bakersfield, California

We're real believers in work experience programs. They're advantageous to students who so often get hit over the head when their resumé's show lack of experience and they permit us to look at a prospective employee before we actually hire. Also, the training is more appropriate. A lot of vocational training in schools is not very relevant to industry.

Fred and I are both members of the National Alliance of Business. That's where we met--at a meeting. People knowing each other is often important and our relationship through the NAB matters, though I really don't know anything about his own business background. He made an appointment with me to come and explain his program and now the students he sends us are working out well.

There's another thing that's helpful and this isn't on the business side: once the student is here with us, it's not all on our side to help the student. The CTC does a really good job. If the student, for instance, doesn't do what he or she is supposed to do, the school steps in and takes over the reprimand or whatever else is needed. They've done a good job of teaching the students what to expect and how to conduct themselves. Maybe I'm old fashioned, but these students come to work very well groomed, polite, knowing how to act. They work without horsing around and I think all that has to be attributed in large degree to the school, which should be commended for the success of the program here.

We wish more schools would prepare people on what I call "work ethics." They're the key to survival in a society that's gone downhill in a lot of ways. Some of the old traits are disappearing; standards don't seem to be as high in the educational institutions. But Fred tells young people what they need to hear. His students come to work on time, dress neatly. People are rarely fired for lack of skills; it happens more likely because they don't get along with others or because a bad attitude affects their attendance. They think they can skip a task or come in late and nothing will happen. Well, something *does* happen in cases like that. Attitude is the most important thing in a successful work relationship; there's no question about it! And that goes for all people. What Fred does with the handicapped students should be done for all people. He takes students who have really been segregated from the real world and prepares them for the world of work.

Robert Webb, CTC Student in Training at Tenneco West, Bakersfield, California

Before I heard about the Career Training Center I didn't know what I was going to do after high school. CTC, to me, is a miracle. You know, you go to high school and then, when you get out, most people grab a job. But when you're handicapped, it's harder to know what you want to major in--or, if you have an idea, you need somebody to help, somebody who knows the ropes. If no one shows you the ropes, you could end up living off Social Security or Welfare for the rest of your life, simply because somebody wasn't there in high school to give you a little help. The CTC has changed my life completely, helped me make a complete turnabout. I wasn't really looking for them, but they came looking for me, and that's great! They're a lifesaver, and more like them are needed.

The CTC is kind of like a family. Everybody knows everybody. I know it's a controlled environment--we all know that. It isn't all kinds of handicapped students mixed with all kinds of "normal" students, which would be ideal; it's not the real thing, but at least all the handicaps are mixed and it gives us things we couldn't get any other way.

I have some set ideas on what the schools should and shouldn't do for handicapped students. Right now, South High serves certain kinds of handicaps, West High serves certain other handicaps. I don't like that. Anytime you segregate, anytime you split, you are, in effect, developing wrong attitudes. Even if you're in there with other "normal" kids, you're not in there with other kinds of handicaps. If you're with all of them, you get a better outlook. I just don't believe in any kind of segregation from the real world; if you do that, you're just asking for it. You have to be where the action really is!

A person is not handicapped because he has a "handicap," but because the environment around him treats him like he's handicapped. People react: "Oh, can I help you?" I go to the store--I get around a lot with my car--and everywhere I go people want to help me. I don't care where it is, everyone wants to help. Several weeks ago, I was Christmas shopping and walked into a store. The door was really hard to open. I was getting it--you know, I like to do things on my own--and just about had it when a lady grabbed it from me and I just about fell. I had to be cool about it, didn't want her to feel bad. Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying it's bad for people to want to help where it's needed, but the way it's done matters, and helplessness shouldn't be assumed.

My parents have been really great. They've handled me in the right way, haven't pampered me. My dad wants me to get out and work. Both my mom and dad are really cool, and my sister. You know, in my family, you'd never know I was handicapped, the way we react and talk to each other. They've helped me over all the rough spots, all my surgeries. I've had heart surgery, leg surgery, back surgery, at least twenty different surgeries.

When I was seven or eight years old, I had a heart disorder that required surgery. Something happened; something went wrong. They said the blood stopped going to the nerves in my lower extremities and the nerves died. That's how I became paralyzed. For about six months I didn't know if I was going to make it. Physically I was, but mentally I was wiped out--really didn't know if I could make it. You know, when you're that age and used to running around with the other kids, and then, bang!--you're in this hospital, you don't really know where you are, and all hell breaks loose; you can't walk. Well, my mom and dad got me through that. I did sue because of the paralysis, but I don't hold any grudge. If I ever met that doctor, I'd say, "Hey, how're you doin'?" I've never held a grudge in all my life. I know it was an accident. You've got to learn to take things.

People tell the handicapped, "You should accept what you've got." Now for a long time I swallowed that terminology, "accept." Then I got to thinking it's all wrong, very inaccurate, obsolete. It's just not correct.

"Accept" means don't have bad feelings about it, no remorse. I found more and more that isn't right. It would be more correct to say, "Live with it, go along with it, but never accept it." Acceptance means taking it with open arms. I've never accepted it, but I live with it.

I understand that it's hard for educators to know what to do with the handicapped. The government has given them something very difficult to do. What the government does is this: There's a closet over there, and it's very dark inside. There's something unknown, something frightening inside, and you're supposed to do something with it. Uncle Sam comes up to you and tells you, "Go and tame that thing!" He throws you in there, simple as that, and with no aid or anything tells you you're supposed to do something with what's inside--throws you in the closet without so much as a light or a club.

We're a society that's really weird. In some areas we come right out and lay things on the line, don't sacrifice anything. In others we create big taboos, fear things, don't want to touch them. That's what we've done with handicaps. I call handicapped people the minority of minorities. We're the least well known of all minorities. And the most feared.

If people treat me like I'm handicapped, then I'll feel handicapped. But if people treat me like you'd treat the guy down the street, I'll feel like the guy down the street--like I'm somebody.

That's why the CTC is so important to me. I've got people to show me the ropes now, to make me feel like a human being, to get me out here in the real world. I believe anyone will make a good worker if you show them how, and people willing to work are willing to learn. It's as simple as that. If I blow my job here at Tenneco, it would blow Mr. Goodwald's credibility and my own, even that of the CTC, the whole program. It's up to me; I'm carrying the ball. After me, someone else will come along to work here. Then, they'll carry the ball, but right now, it's up to me.

See, Mr. Goodwald's philosophy is important. When you go in there to his program, he sets a businesslike attitude. You go in most schools and it's a student/teacher relationship. Wrong--that won't work for vocational training. With Mr. Goodwald it's employee/employer. That's the way he wants it. But, you know, he's a lot more than an employer; he's somebody to talk to. You say, "Hey, I've got a problem," and he'll help you. Yet, he keeps things in perspective, balances things in a certain way so you really know what can and can't be done. He doesn't give you false promises either; he just tells you what the facts are and what to do.

I'm not sure what would have happened to me without the CTC, but I know what I want to do now. I plan to go to Bakersfield Junior College and then Cal State, Bakersfield, a four-year college after that. I'll study accounting and then maybe business administration. One day I'd like to get into a business like solar energy. I do know I want to make money. I mean, they say love makes the world go round, but money greases the wheel.

Equal Opportunity Program NASA, Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas

“Stop hiding handicapped kids; stop letting them be dependent on parents and other people. If you don't make demands on them when they're young, then how can you expect them, all of a sudden, when they get out of school, presto-change, to be normal people?”

Shirley Price

Mainstreaming can be defined as the least restrictive educational approach to full integration in the adult work world, as we saw in the last chapter. Many job situations require skills one cannot realistically expect to be taught in public schools. Recognizing this, industries have begun to make their own contributions to the vocational education of high school students with handicaps, not only when they are recruited as placement sites by schools, but by taking the initiative in recruiting high school students to the workplace. To represent this direction (although it is government-sponsored rather than sponsored by private industry), NASA's programs for handicapped students at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center outside Houston are presented in this chapter.

As NASA's slide presentation, "A Place to Work" says, "Prospective employers want to know if you've ever been able to hold a job. Consequently, that first job is a major stepping stone to full employment." Among other agencies and programs that NASA works with to train handicapped people on site are the Houston Independent School District's vocational education programs for the handicapped. Students with disabilities are recruited to the Space Center from their home high schools and given nonpaid work experience during an observation period that can lead to regular employment.

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tunity Program Office,
Houston, Texas 77058.

In its present form, this program exists primarily through the efforts of Shirley Price (see Introduction). NASA's commitment to participating in state and local programs that assist handicapped persons in gaining work experience is implemented primarily by Ms. Price through the Space Center's Equal Opportunity Programs Office. Since 1976 she has worked with the school districts in the area, as well as with Texas Rehabilitation and other agencies, to provide vocational experience at the NASA site to high school students with handicaps. Seniors in cooperative education programs get school credit for part-time work at the Space Center during the school year. Other handicapped high school students are placed at the Center for summer training. It is not uncommon for these students to begin their work experience with NASA in entry level jobs, in the library, print shop, mail room furniture repair, or as file clerks or typists, and then go on to college, returning to NASA for summer or full-time employment later, perhaps in drafting or engineering departments. Those who do not continue at NASA leave with work skills, the credentials of having worked for an established organization, and motivation to seek other work opportunities.

Much of Shirley Price's recruitment and liaison work involves speaking at seminars, workshops, and career day programs in junior and senior high schools to make sure the NASA opportunity is known to as many handicapped students as possible. Ms. Price herself came to the NASA Space Center in 1971 under a summer employment program for handicapped persons that permitted NASA to observe their performance before offering regular staff positions.

Having passed muster, Ms. Price began working as an administrative assistant in a radiation-measurement laboratory, but she set her own conditions for staying on: that she could look around the Center and find a job more to her interest. She chose the Employment Development Branch and became the Special Programs Coordinator. Among her programs was the one for the handicapped, which at that time offered the probationary summer employment opportunity only to a small handful of people. Shirley got the Center to increase the number of handicapped people included in that program and to add more training opportunities. She extended training to students, both high school and college, and found various sources of initial support for them. She investigated every avenue of assistance, crusaded, cajoled, maneuvered, and managed until today the Center employs some ninety-three handicapped people besides offering on-site training in various departments, only a few of which--library, print shop, furniture repair, and filing --I was able to visit during my brief stay.

Shirley Price, Equal Opportunity Specialist, Equal Opportunity Program, NASA, Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas

As a child, I never went to a special school, but from age three or four until I was about six years old, I did have a special teacher. In all honesty, she didn't teach me much, no more than the things you're taught in first grade, because I learned so very young and so fast. I was writing--printing--and singing at the age of two. Well, I wanted to know why I couldn't attend regular school, but my parents thought it would be better for me to go to this teacher's home. I lived in Hitchcock, Texas, and I was taken to Galveston to her place. I didn't mind it at first, you know, but I was really learning mostly at home with the aid of my eight sisters and seven brothers. They were very accustomed to me, had gotten used to me, and after some discovery of my own initiative and "badness" they realized that I was going to use my feet like they used their hands. There wasn't anything anybody could do or not do to teach me, because they didn't know how. So they'd just say, "this is the way we do it, now you show us how you're going to do it."

I write, type, sew, cook and do all that other good stuff with my feet. My parents really didn't have any training, per se. There was no one to tell them, "Well, you have a handicapped child and this is how you take care of her." They didn't know. My life story is, I'd say, a miracle story, and it's a lot to hear so we won't even go into it. But it's my opinion--because I finally talked my parents into allowing me to go to what I call regular school--that handicapped kids who are physically handicapped only, should be in a regular classroom setting and should be allowed opportunity to function the way that they know how. That's why I feel to this day that the best move is putting physically handicapped kids back into regular classrooms. Maybe those who are mentally handicapped need to be in classrooms by themselves at first, so that they won't be embarrassed by others, but professionals should be with them to determine what they can learn. Now, if a child can learn on a seventh or sixth grade level, put him in a seventh or sixth grade, regardless of age, and let him learn to his greatest potential. Stop hiding handicapped kids; stop letting them be dependent on parents and other people. If you don't make demands on them when they're young, then how can you expect them, all of a sudden, when they get out of school, presto-chango, to be normal people? They can't adjust that quickly. They've gone through twelve years in the restricted environment of special education classes and now the only way they can graduate is to get into a work situation. Well, my goodness, a work situation? These children haven't even lived with the rest of the community, you know, and all of a sudden they're expected to go into a work situation in order to graduate! That's pressure. They haven't been allowed to participate in basketball, football, any of the extracurricular activities. Kids look at them like they're crazy, make fun of them, and eventually they get so accustomed to that kind of treatment that if they're not treated like that, they'll wonder what's wrong! They'll think you don't like them.

Now I'm going to speak from an employer's point of view, okay? The schools want employers to say, "Yes, we'll hire them." How can employers do that? It isn't that the handicapped youngsters are not able to perform; I think they can. I've proved to myself that they can because we've had them here. But it's a hard situation on some of them socially because they come out to a whole new world. And they are so accustomed that if they don't know how to do something, well then they don't have to do it.

Our training program here has been just beautiful because these handicapped participants get so wrapped up in the whole idea, in the chance to try being trained at something they know nothing about and possibly hired permanently. It was just beautiful to see it work with

the deaf, the blind, the retarded, the epileptic. Some quadraplegics applied but found it hard because they didn't have living facilities in this area that met their requirements and that they could afford. I've only had a few people in wheelchairs who applied, but I've had quite a few on crutches, and many blind people. The Center has become more and more aware of handicapped people and their needs, and I think me and my big mouth made them aware!

When I experienced a ride in an elevator almost half a day because I couldn't use the buttons, and told them about it, they said, "Well, what's your suggestion?" And I suggested they lower the controls. They did. Then we got a committee together, consisting of our engineers, myself, one other person from Personnel and a doctor, to look at how we could change the Center to meet the needs of handicapped people. Now, I don't expect the Center to go to extremes with facilities, you know. There are a lot of things that we could do, but I only asked them to change facilities if there was a need to change. If a new employee comes into a building where there is no ramp, I call up and say, "Hey, we now have a new employee over in building such and such; he needs a parking space and he needs a ramp," and they just automatically put the ramp there. No questions asked. They lowered the elevator controls over there in Building #45 for me. When I moved over here, I called the engineers and said, "Hey, I am not going to be standing out in that lobby waiting on people to push the buttons for me and I am not going to be riding up and down nine floors." And he said, "Okay, Shirley, we'll take care of it." Two weeks later they came in and modified two elevators for me. The controls are lowered. And the more they do, the more they become aware. The secretaries thought it was a fantastic idea to have the controls lowered; they say, "Now if my hands are full, I can push it with my elbow," --that kind of thing. They just hadn't thought about it before. I've talked with them about the water fountains being too high and built so you can't push a wheelchair underneath them to really drink the water. There's a lady in a wheelchair in another building; they modified the restrooms for her. They're really very receptive. It was just having someone draw their attention to the things that are needed.

As far as hiring, I could say that we're slow, but that's really not true. We are and we aren't. There is a problem of finding handicapped people have been so stereotyped that their education, in high school, or vocational training has been in skills that they can't use out in this real world--pottery, basket weaving, things like that.

The Center contracts its janitorial service, so we can't hire for that. That's up to our contractors. And I think that's good. I love, that we can't. When I go to agencies, I can tell them we don't do any stereotype hiring. Because that's the first thing most people think of for handicapped people: cleaning the floors, and the yard in the hot sun, or whatever.

I first got involved with the Houston Independent School District through the Vocational Office Education Program some years ago. Then I said, why not find out what they're doing for handicapped kids? The district has learning centers for handicapped kids who are in class at regular schools, maybe half a day, and then the rest of the day they go to the centers for vocational programs. They have food services, they have home economics where they teach the girls how to sew and whatever then they have horticulture, where they're learning about plants and everything, and they have a shop area where the guys are learning to build, home building, construction. And it's very, very nice. I thought it was an excellent program. But when I asked, "Where are the students in the clerical fields?" I was told there aren't any. *There's vocational office education in the regular school system, but handicapped kids just don't get into that. Most of the skills the learning centers were teaching were irrelevant to NASA. So, I decided to take some students, get them out here and get them trained in the fields that need workers out here. We have a lot to do yet in setting up more opportunities, but we're on the way.*

I go straight to the public schools and talk with the kids to tell them about opportunities at the Center. I don't interview them at their schools because I want them to feel the responsibility of having to go elsewhere--to a potential work site--to be interviewed, but I go to the schools to give them the information about the opportunities.

Since I'd been assigned as handicap coordinator in 1971 and the management felt I had handled that pretty well, I was given the responsibility of writing an affirmative action plan when it came out we had to have one in 1973. I've been writing the affirmative action plan for the Center ever since then, for all the handicapped persons.

We aren't going to get far until some of our handicapped people come out and say, "Yeah, I'm handicapped," and let others see. It was hard for me to get them to participate in the slide show we made on hiring the handicapped. They'd say, "Hey, I don't want to be exploited. I mean, you know, don't rock the boat for me. I'm doing fine. You put my picture in the paper and maybe it's going to draw too much attention. I don't want my supervisor to see that I have a handicap. He may think I really can't function." And I say, "But that's not the point; the point is, you should be willing to let yourself be seen or heard about or read about so that other

handicapped people can feel that there's someone they can identify with."

Sometimes schools ask me to come in and speak to the kids on special career day programs that they're having. I've spoken at luncheons and banquets for the students, things like that. A lot of times they like to have me come because, well, they use the example of saying, Here's a handicapped person--if she can do it, you can do it. The kids want to know, how does she do it? Sometimes I go to the school for recruiting purposes, and they want me to show them how I write. So I do it. A lot of people think I'm just a big showoff, but that's not it. If my sitting up there writing with my feet is going to inspire them to come on out for a job interview, then I'll do it!

I've been on local television, and I think that the awards I've received have caused a lot of publicity. But the fact is, if seeing me do anything would inspire other handicapped people--If she can do it, I can do it--then, hey, that's the whole point.

I'll give you an example. There was a young man, who was playing in the garage with a gas can at the age of twelve. The gas can blew up, he caught fire, 95 percent of his body burned. He didn't go back to school. He was nineteen years old when I met him. And very badly burned. I felt like maybe he had a complex, you know? They asked me if I would hire him, and I say, yeah, sure. He had never been involved with other people; imagine him coming out to this work site with all these people looking at him. At first it was really hard for him, but now he's in college, and he's just doing great. He's saying, Yeah, I can do it! He improved in his appearance; he finally felt like he was a part of the world. He was really a human being.

My next goal here is to set up a Stay-In-School program for handicapped students, but to get NASA to pay for it is going to take my writing a proposal. First I had to prove what handicapped kids could do. And this is why having CETA programs and Work-Study programs has really helped.

One of the projects we started here is a furniture repair program. The majority of participants have been students, some in high school, but they have not had any vocational education. We had to find out what they could do, how they could function, how long they could stay on the job, if they could stay on the job all day. I felt a formal training program would probably be taxing to them, because they had come out of a classroom in the early part of the day, and they needed relief. So just being trained here at NASA on the job was in some instances the thing that most of them really needed.

Some are people with epilepsy; others have physical and mental handicaps, and the attitude of the staff toward these young people has been so fantastic it made these handicapped persons want to stay. A lot of them didn't want to leave, because everyone included them and treated them as if they were regular employees. That has inspired a lot of them to go right on to college. As a matter of fact, I think, of that group--if I can remember correctly --three went on to college and one is now working for another federal agency--I believe dealing with airplane pilots or something of that nature--and I hear from others, too. Every now and then they'll write me and say, "Shirley, I'm doing such and such a thing; I wanted to say hello to you." And they'll pick up the phone and say, "Hey, I'm looking for a job; tell me where to go." It's just the fact that here they were treated like they were somebody. And as Mr. Jobe says, it was with minimal supervision. But to those young people and to me, it was just the kind of supervision that they needed. To stand over anyone and watch them do their work can make a person very nervous. The fact that the staff showed the students what to do and left them to do it themselves, instead of saying, "No, now that's not right, you use this and use that," was really important. If they had problems or questions, they were not afraid to come and talk with the staff. They felt like everybody here was on the same level.

Once they're working out here, I try to get the students in low-level jobs to realize what other programs are at the Center that they can go into later: the college programs, the programs that give advancement. Like Doreen. My main aim is to get Doreen in what we call our WTO program. It's upward mobility for clericals: Worker Trainee Opportunity. And she's not the only handicapped person in clerical. I've got a young girl who has cerebral palsy. She came in through the summer program, for two summers straight. I'm so proud of her. The only thing she hasn't done yet--and I've told her that she's got to hurry up--is to drive a car. She asked me, "Do you think I can drive a car?" I said, "I can." And she said, "Yeah, all right, I can." She got into the WTO program, and now she's a mail clerk in the astronauts' mail room. I told her, "Now don't stop here. What I want you to do is pay attention to announcements for other jobs, and when announcements come, and there are jobs vacant that you feel you can qualify for, call me. We'll see if we can't put in your application for it. You must remember now, you're a regular employee here. Nobody's going to do anything special for you. You've got to see it yourself and just draw my attention to it and I'll help you." And she says, "Okay!"

I feel that there is no area here at the Center the handicapped kids should not have access to as an opportunity. I'm also a people person, so I think of the supervisors: who can best deal with this particular person, or this particular girl, or this particular young

man? Who can really best deal with them and make them feel like a person--not mother them, not pamper them, and not be afraid of them, but treat them like responsible human beings. These are the things I consider in placement.

Nicholas Jakir, Branch Chief, Printing Management, NASA--Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas

Our experience with handicapped trainees goes back over ten years. In the late sixties we were approached by the Texas Rehabilitation people in conjunction with the school system. At that time they had an individual they wanted us to try and hire. He was mentally retarded--or he is retarded, rather. He's still with us. That was our first exposure to working with handicapped people. Naturally, I had some inbred inhibitions. You know, as we grow we're exposed to everything and we believe what we're told to a certain degree. Yes, I definitely had fears. But the concern was mostly for the safety of the individual. I guess it's an overprotective overcautious feeling.

We started him out in the bindery area; this is where jobs are completed, or put together, bound, and mailed or otherwise directed. His problem was emotional; he was easily excitable. He had an advisor, or counselor, with whom we had periodic meetings, especially before we made any move or change. Anyway, he progressed in this area to the point he's now operating on his own. He didn't come on board through the regular government channels of taking an exam, but recently--in the last three years--he was converted to what we call a career, or permanent, employee. He's no longer under the wing, shall we say, of his counselor, although he is still classified mentally retarded. He's very conscientious, very interested in what he's doing. He's here on time; he leaves on time. And this is representative of the others we've had on a more temporary basis. After this individual became a permanent employee with us, we had a student during the summer who was also retarded and we used him in the bindery area. He operated equipment and also did an excellent job. Then we had a deaf student, also in the bindery. He worked out very well with the equipment. He had a different sense of feel, I guess, that he developed to compensate for his lack of hearing. He was so enthralled with the printing he changed his major. In fact, he came back the following summer and ran an offset press. That was our first venture into equipment where you go by sounds. If there's something wrong, you hear it, like a paper jam or squealing, which lets you know that there's something wrong. Of course, visually you can see the quality of your product. It would tell you if something's wrong. The interesting part was how his senses differed. He worked right along with the rest of the people and became as good as or better than the producer. Then we had two more individuals who were deaf. Incidentally, we trained these people: they had no prior

experience. It worked out very well. They could read lips of the people who trained them and one of my men does know sign language; he has a deaf daughter. So this helped us. But initially we were really "bridging the communication gap," I guess that's the best way to express it.

The three gentlemen on the press were high producers, simply because they didn't talk to each other. They made signs. I'm serious. It's interesting. They didn't have any visitations, so they were more preoccupied in doing the job. But one thing about all of the people with handicaps, they seem to strive to be better, better than most.

Robert Boyd, Chief, Logistics Division, NASA, Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas

As the chief of the division, I think my immediate anxiety when we started talking about this program was whether or not those handicapped people could come into an environment like this and actually do a productive job. I was afraid that in repairing office furniture, for example, that possibly they could hurt themselves. But this was readily proven to be a false concern, because they relate to their handicaps and the need for safety in the environment around them very effectively.

The students were a little bit nervous at the beginning, too, you know, feeling that maybe someone would look down on them for some problem they had, but they soon, very quickly in fact, got over this because our people just took them in like other employees and treated them the same way. And that made for a very good program. We're anxious to continue it. In fact, the Supply Branch Chief, Mr. Jobe, was telling me today that his furniture stockpile is getting to the point that he is planning to call Shirley now and tell her there's more work available.

The other area that we have been using students with handicaps in is the clerical area. In our Property Branch we maintain a lot of hard copy records of equipment--the whole accountability system that the Center requires. This paper constantly has to be put into a file arrangement or withdrawn and subsequently put back. We have taught some of the handicapped students techniques of good file maintainance. Coming directly from their high schools, without previous working knowledge, they have caught on to this very well. They've been very productive for us, and we feel they gained a lot from it. And from all indications, they enjoyed working with us too. Handicapped people have proven to be very dedicated and have been highly productive for us as well as for themselves. So we're quite impressed with continuing the program.

Doreen Ward, Student File Clerk in Training at NASA--
Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas

Doreen Ward, a student file clerk in training at NASA--
Johnson Space Center is mentally retarded. She has been
working at NASA for a year and a half while attending
a nearby high school on a part-time basis. Ms. Ward was
proud to demonstrate her skills as a file clerk and talk
about her work: "This is my second year of being a high
school senior and I'll be graduating next May. On
Mondays I go to school to work on typing. If there
wasn't NASA, I'd probably be working in a restaurant
or something like that--maybe in a store. I like it
here--the rockets and stuff. I hope I'll be here a
long time."

Epilog

Setting out to gather information for this book, I expected to find answers for the big questions about mainstreaming, curricula, settings, and services. I expected some model, some ideal composite program to emerge from the collective wisdom and experience of interviewees.

Surely the preparation of young people for their adult roles as productive income earners and fulfilled human beings is the biggest responsibility our education system has. Surely we must do this as well for the youngsters with handicaps, whom we have so long neglected or misguided into dependency, as we do for those without disabilities. Surely we can identify the needed curriculum and service components to write the guidelines for a program that will do this well. These three propositions seemed firm to me, and certainly I encountered nothing in my travels to shake the first two. But the third I came to doubt.

The programs I pursued as representative of the best practices in this field, on recommendations from experts, did not disappoint me. I wager they are as good as any to be found. But it quickly became apparent that the critical features of these programs did not lie in their observable structure and content.

They were not best because of their funding, the credentials of their staffs, the content of their curricula, the adequacy of their settings. They stood out because of their atmosphere--an atmosphere generated, in every case, by the people making the programs happen.

I began to ask myself what it was they all had in common. What was it that enabled some to operate on a shoestring while others had plenty? What was it that permitted some to succeed by collecting handicapped kids in a special setting while others could throw them into the mainstream with equally good results? What was it that enabled some to do well knowing little about "special education" while others relied on considerable expertise?

As I observed these differences, and as I watched handicapped youngsters interacting with administrators, teachers, counselors, employers, I began to realize that what really mattered was the quality of the human contact made between handicapped kids and the adults around them. Whether these youngsters learn skills, achieve independence and self-respect, become productive and fulfilled adults depends on the same factors as does the success of young people without disabilities. Someone has to believe in them and lend some support and encouragement.

If their teachers and other mentors believe they can, they will develop despite physical limitations, sensory impairments, mental deficiencies. And they will do so in whatever setting they find themselves, provided that setting has the atmosphere of belief in their capabilities and extends from freedom of choice in using those abilities and making them grow.

All the good people making good programs do so with considerable creativity. Each has a style of his or her own; each believes in particular program structure and content; each needs to put his or her own mark on how it's done. Most of them could not work well if constrained by rigid rules and schedules. They quite naturally oppose the idea of limitations. And it is because they do that they are able to undo our deeply ingrained social construct of the "handicapped person."

Who could meet Shirley Price, Robert Webb, or Donna Batelaan and persist in seeing physical handicaps as barriers to the fullest human development? Who can meet a professional program director who was once mentally retarded and give up on an "EMR" or "TMR" youngster? Who can listen to a teacher tell how past skepticism or disbelief was wiped out by the success of even one handicapped student and not listen to the unvoiced plea of another: *Believe in me.*

Program descriptions, curriculum guides, information on handicaps, sources of funding, recommendations for support services--all these are available in many forms (see Bibliography). The purpose of this book is not to duplicate such information, for readers will surely seek it out, find it and use whatever is of value to them as soon as they decide to initiate or expand their own programs in vocational education for handicapped students. This book is simply intended to convey the attitudes that come first and the rewards that follow from holding them.

The doctor who delivered Shirley Price put her away in a shoebox. Donna Batelaan relates the persistence of "throw-away" attitudes. Handicapped people know, as Marc Gold has said, that their "deviance" can only be vindicated by competence beyond that expected of others.

Personally, I would like nothing more than to see Robert Webb graduate from business school and one day run his own solar power company. And well he may do just that. But he shouldn't have to. His faith in himself and ours in him should be rooted in the simple fact that he is first and foremost a person--with the freedom of choice and the opportunity to go as far as he personally wishes.

I had a letter from Robert the other day in which he expressed a few more "ideals" for the lives of handicapped people than those he has already presented in these pages. The financial resources of families with handicapped children, he pointed out, are often exhausted dealing with the handicap itself, long before college tuition might be due. Why not government assurance of these children's higher education, he asks?

Why not, indeed? Our goals should be as far-reaching as we have vision to see. But let us not lose sight, in the meantime, of the immediate task before us. Let us see to it that Robert is not unique in finding a mentor like Fred Goodwald who encourages him to pursue his dream.

As I set down these concluding remarks, I keep seeing the word "maverick" in my mind. The word may have been planted there by Chuck Wrobel (see Chapter 2), for it is a label he may well have put on himself during our conversations. "Maverick" has come to mean an unbranded calf and is variously used to describe deviants or independents, but the word itself comes to us directly from the name of Sam Maverick, a Texas pioneer who refused to brand his calves. There is an obvious association here with people who refuse to let handicapped youngsters be labeled in ways that identify them by "brands" that interfere with their development as people. You have met Chuck Wrobel, who was labeled many things in his day, and Connie Bohns (also in Chapter 2), who was marked "incorrigible," and Steve Weeks (Chapter 1), who was considered "retarded," and Donna Batelaan (Chapter 4) who was assumed to be a "helpless quadriplegic," as well as Shirley Price, Robert Webb, and others who bucked and kicked against their own branding, then dedicated themselves to helping others remove or avoid their brands. Those you met who did not suffer personal branding were usually sensitive to the problem for others long before they assumed professional roles as educators and advocates. A parent made them aware, or a retarded sister, or an epileptic schoolmate. Unfortunately, countless people in our society manage to grow up without such experiences--testimony to the way our society has hidden people with handicaps away from our schools, workplaces, and media entertainment.

In many ways, the people who worked hardest to mainstream youngsters with handicaps long before legislation mandated it, who made environments less restrictive, who refused to let labels identify people, are mavericks who stand out from the herd. But it is time now for everyone to join them in taking down all environmental barriers to the full life and career development of every young person.

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Teaching the Handicapped*

By Peter R. Dahl, Judith A. Appleby, and Dewey Lipe

Each chapter stands on its own as an essay. Contents include: Entering the Mainstream: How & Why; Developing Positive Staff and Student Attitudes toward Mainstreaming; Eliminating Architectural Barriers; Assessing the Individual Handicapped Student; Modifying Curriculum--Eliminating Equipment and Work Environment Barriers; and Placing Handicapped Students in Jobs.

Olympus Publishing Company
1670 East 13th Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84105

1978; 324pp.; \$16.95

Careers and Disabilities: A Career Education Approach
By David C. Gardner and Sue Allen Warren

An interdisciplinary text in special education and career education. The book suggests ways to increase the quality and quantity of the work performed by handicapped persons.

Greylock Publishers
13 Spring Street, Stamford, Connecticut 06901

1978; 176 pp.; \$10.

*Vocational Education for the Handicapped:
Guide to Federal Regulations*

A roadmap to the Rehabilitation Act of 1978 (Public Law 93-112), Section 504; the Education of the Handicapped Act: Part B, 1975 (Public Law 94-142); and the Rehabilitation Act of 1963 (Public Law 94-482). One chapter compares the regulations, and support appendices include the texts of rules and regulations.

Texas Regional Resource Center
Texas Education Agency
201 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701

Technical Report No.5, 1978; 267 pp.; \$3.

*Career Exploration and Preparation
for the Special Needs Learner*
By L. Allen Phelps and Ronald J. Lutz

A guide to planning and delivering individualized vocational education for handicapped students. Includes detailed suggestions for creating workable programs.

Allyn and Bacon
Longwood Division, Link Drive, Rockleigh, New Jersey
07647

1977; 359 pp.; \$15.95.

*Guidance, Counseling and Support Services for High
School Students with Physical Disabilities: Visual,
Hearing, Orthopedic, Neuromuscular, Epilepsy, Chronic
Health Conditions*

A practical resource manual for those who serve students who are handicapped. Details issues, materials, practices, and resources, including a variety of pupil personnel services, such as career development and guidance, vocational assessment, and job placement. Applicable to secondary and postsecondary programs.

Technical Education Research Centers
44 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

1978; 457 pp.; \$15.

Another Step Forward
By Stuart Schwartz

Five booklets stressing issues and current legislation relevant to the integration of physically, emotionally, and mentally handicapped students into vocational education programs and classrooms. For secondary and postsecondary vocational education teachers and administrators.

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
Publications Office
1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210

1978; S.N. 21; \$8.25 per set, quantity prices available.

Vocational Education: Teaching the Handicapped in Regular Classes

Edited by Robert A. Weisgerber

Included are details about federal policy and program support for handicapped students; the concept of the regular class as the least restrictive environment for many students; the importance of a success oriented climate for learning; steps involved in developing individualized instruction. Specific handicapping conditions addressed are orthopedic, visual, mental retardation, and communication impairment.

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091

1978; 96 pp.; \$8.50.

Other Resources:

Special Education Resources for Vocational Education

Annotations for assessment resources, approximately fifty general information publications and training materials programs. Also, basic information on six regional Curriculum Coordination Centers that provide vocational and technical education curriculum information.

Midwest Regional Resource Center
1132 26th Street, Drake University, Des Moines, IA 50311

September 1978; 25 pp.; no charge.

Bibliography of Secondary Materials, A Bibliography of Materials for Handicapped and Special Education

About 100 titles. References on delivery of special education, vocational education and industrial arts services to handicapped students, plus information on clearing houses, regional resource centers, university resources, relevant journals, information systems, and ERIC clearing houses.

President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
Washington, D.C. 20010

1977; 39pp.; no charge.

*Vocational Education Resource Materials, A Bibliography
of Materials for Handicapped and Special Education*

Thousands of references, primarily print, are listed in this comprehensive collection. A short annotated film bibliography is included.

Wisconsin Vocational Studies Center
University of Wisconsin, Madison
964 Educational Sciences Building
1025 West Johnston Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706

1978: 3rd edition; 110 pp.; \$4 + \$2 handling.

*Program Information Office, The National Center for
Research in Vocational Education*

The National Center's staff conducts basic research, searches for good products, and assists in planning and conceptualizing workshops. The Program Information Office serves as a resource referral service.

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University, 1960 Kenny Road,
Columbus, Ohio 43210
(614) 486-3655, or Toll free: 800-848-4815

ERIC Clipboard (newsletter)

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational
Education
The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210

Common Sense from Closer Look (newsletter)

The National Association of Vocational Education Special
Needs Personnel
State Board for Vocational Education, Boise, Idaho 83720

*Career Development for Exceptional Individuals
(quarterly journal)*

Council for Exceptional Children
Division of Career Development
1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091

\$15/year for nonmembers.